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Friday, 20 February 2004, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Wang Guangya	(China)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Baali
	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Benin	Mr. Adechi
	Brazil	Mr. Sardenberg
	Chile	Mr. Muñoz
	France	Mr. Duclos
	Germany	Mr. Pleuger
	Pakistan	Mr. Khalid
	Philippines	Mr. Baja
	Romania	Mr. Motoc
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	Spain	Ms. Menéndez
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Thomson
	United States of America	Mr. Holliday

Agenda

The situation in Timor-Leste

Special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (S/2004/117)

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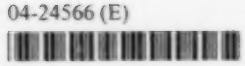

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Timor-Leste

Special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (S/2004/117)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Australia, Fiji, Indonesia, Ireland, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, the Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand and Timor-Leste, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Ramos-Horta (Timor-Leste) took a seat at the Council table; the representatives of the other aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Guéhenno to take a seat at the Council table.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 18 February 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Brazil, which reads as follows:

"I have the honour to request that the Executive Secretary of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, Ambassador João Augusto de Médicis, participate, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 39 of the Security Council's provisional rules of procedure, in the Council's public meeting on Timor-Leste, to be held next Friday, 20 February 2004."

That letter has been issued as a document of the security Council under the symbol S/2004/120.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. João Augusto de Médicis.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. João Augusto de Médicis to take a seat at the side of the Council Chamber.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2004/117, which contains the special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor.

I should also like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to document S/2004/108, which contains a letter dated 11 February 2004 from Portugal, and document S/2004/114, which contains a letter dated 12 February 2004 from Timor-Leste.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

I now give the floor to Mr. Guéhenno.

Mr. Guehenno: I am pleased and honoured to introduce the special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) (S/2004/117), in the presence of His Excellency Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Foreign Minister of Timor-Leste.

The report presents, as promised, proposals for continued support to Timor-Leste after the conclusion of the current mandate on 20 May 2004. We welcome this opportunity to share with Council members the

thinking behind our proposals, and hope that this may support a fruitful debate.

Before discussing the report itself, I would like to bring to the attention of the Security Council two recent developments in Timor-Leste that are not reflected in the text. First, I would like to note that, some days ago, President Gusmão approved the law on village elections. This is an important advance in terms of reinforcing the role of electoral processes in Timor-Leste and in fostering local engagement in governance. It is expected that further steps will be taken to clarify the roles and responsibilities of village chiefs and village councils. These will be the first elections in independent Timor-Leste, and will be the basis on which broader electoral laws can be developed for national elections.

Secondly, I wish to inform members of the Security Council of a recent incident that suggests the continuing fragility of the situation on the ground, particularly in the area near the border. While this incident took place before the issuance of the present report, it could not be included in the text because of the incomplete level of information at that time.

On 29 January, a group of villagers from West Timor entered Timor-Leste and, possibly in a continuation of a local feud, burned some structures in a village in the area and may have stolen some livestock. Timorese officials, supported by UNMISET, continue to investigate the incident and discuss it with Indonesian counterparts. This incident was also reviewed at the inter-command meeting, held in Bali earlier this week, which was attended not only by Indonesian and UNMISET military commanders, but also by the Commander of the Timor-Leste armed forces, Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak.

I would now like to turn to the report before the members of the Security Council.

An appeal for additional support for Timor-Leste after 20 May 2004 faces a paradoxical challenge because of the remarkable progress that has already occurred. It is, indeed, easy to forget that Timor-Leste has taken shape in less than five years. But the reality is that there is a limit to how much can be achieved in so short a period of time, and Timor-Leste, the poorest country in South-East Asia, continues to face significant challenges, for which it will continue to require international assistance.

When the Security Council established UNMISET on 20 May 2002, it acknowledged that the Mission's assistance would be crucial even after the country crossed the symbolic threshold of independence. The mission was mandated to support the continued development of an independent Timor-Leste and to build upon what had been achieved until then. That decision testified to the Council's determination that, as noted by the Deputy Secretary-General, there should be no exit without strategy. Remarkable progress has occurred since then, based on close partnership between the international community and the Timorese leadership and people. But as the conclusion of UNMISET's original two-year mandate approaches, it is clear that the line of true self-sufficiency has not yet been crossed.

As reflected in the Secretary-General's report, the Secretariat has concluded that the continued presence of a small peacekeeping operation for an additional one-year consolidation phase is essential to reinforce and strengthen what has been achieved to date. The Secretariat's recommendations were based upon an extensive analysis, including by UNMISET, of needs on the ground, and drew upon valuable input from Member States. They also seek to take full account of the vision of the Timorese leadership for their country's progress.

The recommendations were derived through a two-step process. The first step was to determine tasks in the most concrete terms, reflecting crucial gaps in Timorese capacity that could threaten the country's stability and security and where no viable alternative form of support exists. Secondly, in those cases where we concluded that United Nations assistance was crucial, we sought to identify the best means through which UNMISET could contribute. In most cases, those recommendations have emphasized an advisory rather than operational approach since that is more compatible with Timor-Leste's progress towards self-sufficiency. Where an operational role was under consideration, we gave particular attention to assuming responsibilities that we were confident we could discharge effectively.

I would now like briefly to summarize the recommendations that resulted from that analysis and discuss the logic behind them. The provision of assistance to the public administration has been one of the most challenging tasks undertaken by the United Nations in Timor-Leste. The speed of progress is

limited both by the complexity of the skills that are being imparted and by the close linkage between a country's institutional development and a process of political evolution that cannot be artificially accelerated.

When UNMISET began, Timor-Leste's administration included about 8,700 Timorese civil servants out of a total of approximately 13,190. Today, that number has increased to 11,000, and significant headway has been made in strengthening institutions of State. Skills have increased steadily, and civil servants are effectively discharging many functions on a daily basis. But as recognized in the Secretary-General's report, further assistance is crucial for two broad reasons.

First, it is necessary to support the continued development of Timorese capacities and to ensure the country's functioning during that process. This is particularly urgent in those areas that are critical to long- and short-term stability, such as the Ministries of Finance and the Interior, the Office of the Secretary for Defence and the justice system.

Secondly, preparation of civil service legislation has barely begun. International assistance is crucial for the formulation of the policy and legislative frameworks that will provide secure foundations for the country's future development.

We believe that this additional year of support would make a meaningful difference in enabling the country to reach the threshold of self-sufficiency. However, for the reasons that I mentioned, there are real limits to what can be achieved, and some further long-term assistance may be required even after this period. For that reason, the responsibilities of civilian advisers will include the identification of alternative solutions by which to continue support, if that remains necessary after this year has ended. Already, since the report was issued, the Government has convened a workshop with UNMISET and development partners where it presented plans based on the clear understanding that those advisers, if approved, would conclude their assignment in May 2005. The Government has launched an intensive discussion on means to ensure a smooth transition after that assistance ended.

The recommendations to the Security Council in support of the conduct of serious crimes investigations and proceedings would allow progress in an area where much has already been done. As reflected in the Secretary-General's report, 81 indictments have now been issued, with 369 indictees. A total of 48 convictions have resulted — two having been issued in the past two weeks — as well as one acquittal. Thirteen of these were related to the 10 priority cases, while trials with regard to two further priority cases are ongoing and are expected to conclude by May 2004.

However, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report, a number of trials will remain pending by 20 May 2004 and further indictments are in the process of preparation, including those related to the killing of two local United Nations staff. Continued international assistance is crucial for this process, which gives expression to the Security Council's determination that such crimes will not be perpetrated with impunity and helps to reduce the risk of tensions among the Timorese population, while strengthening confidence in the justice system. The support we have proposed will permit completion of serious crimes cases at the trial level and progress at the appellate level, in particular with relation to the 10 priority cases.

I would like also to note that, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report, the great majority of those who have been indicted remain outside the country. Close cooperation among Member States will be essential to ensure that all those who are responsible are brought to justice.

Turning to UNMISET's programme in support of internal security and law enforcement, the establishment of an effective and professional police force has been, and remains, a core objective of the United Nations involvement in Timor-Leste. It is also an area where, despite inevitable frustrations at the complexity of the task, notable progress has been achieved. When UNMISET began, approximately 1,800 Timorese police officers had been trained and deployed, and the contingent of 1,250 United Nations police had responsibility for all executive policing functions. Today — just 21 months later — the Timorese police force, now numbering 3,024, has assumed responsibility for all daily, routine patrolling throughout the country. That includes the assumption of responsibilities along the border area, where they are playing a key role under difficult circumstances. The United Nations has retained daily operational responsibilities only in the area of crowd control, in order to afford the Timorese riot unit the time it requires to undergo additional intensive training before

20 May 2004. As reflected in the report, the international police contingent now includes only this 125-officer formed police unit and approximately 200 officers who are advising and discharging residual headquarters functions.

For all the progress that has been achieved, the creation of law enforcement agencies takes time. International assistance will remain crucial for a further 12 months after 20 May 2004 to ensure the police service's effective functioning and to reinforce professional values and skills.

As reflected, this would be based upon the continued deployment of 157 civilian police advisers after May — down from the current figure of 200 — with staffing requirements to be reviewed by the end of the year. Further adjustments should also be possible to accommodate bilateral assistance that materializes on the ground before the end of April, when our proposals will be finalized.

We also gave extensive consideration to the possibility of UNMISET's retaining an operational role in responding to civil disturbance. We share the analysis of some Member States that such problems could indeed occur. However, the Timorese leadership has indicated its strong preference for the exercise of full executive authority in policing after May 2004, and it would be logical that operational responsibilities in this area, as in others, be undertaken by Timorese forces, in order to preserve a single line of command. We undertook an extensive review of the capacity of the Timorese anti-riot unit and concluded that its preparation should be adequate by 20 May 2004.

For those reasons, we concluded that the better course would be to redouble our training efforts through the end of the current mandate and to retain an advisory presence after that date. At the same time, it is urgent that the leadership of Timor-Leste develop the necessary legislative and policy frameworks, which will clarify the basis for cooperation between the armed forces and the police, in particular with regard to back-up in the case of civil disturbance.

Finally, progress in the area of external security and border control has benefited greatly from the statesmanlike commitment that has been shown by the Indonesian and Timorese leadership. However, agreement on the border and on practical arrangements for its management has not yet been reached, and the potential for tensions or destabilizing actions remains within communities in the western districts. At the same time, the creation of structures and relationships on the ground requires further time. While the Border Patrol Unit has assumed its responsibilities, and while the Timorese armed forces (F-FDTL) have continued to develop, both institutions remain thinly stretched, and further clarification of their responsibilities is essential. In addition, the establishment of the Rapid Deployment Service remains considerably behind schedule.

In this context, an essential role continues to be played by military observers, who are monitoring developments within a potentially volatile area and are supporting close relationships between Timorese and Indonesian border personnel. It is therefore recommended that a small group of 42 military liaison officers could be retained along the border to discharge similar functions for a further year after 20 May 2004. The requirement for their presence could be reviewed in December, against progress in border arrangements and the development of necessary Timorese capacity.

This proposal brings an additional requirement — the need to incorporate a realistic strategy for the protection of those officers who will deploy, unarmed, in an uncertain environment in which local response capacity is still limited. It is our responsibility as managers to measure very carefully the risks faced by the men and women provided by our Member States; the importance of appropriate precautions has been all too clearly demonstrated over the past year.

In this context, it is proposed that a small formed military presence, with aviation and support, be retained after May 2004; this component would number 308 personnel in total. Its primary role would be to provide security, protection and extraction for United Nations personnel — in particular our military liaison officers, but also police and civilians.

At the same time, that presence would help respond to the priority goal of the Timorese leadership, as conveyed in Prime Minister Alkatiri's letter to the Secretary-General, that a continued international military presence be provided to promote calm at a time of potential volatility. By maintaining a high level of visibility through regular patrols and civil-military cooperation, that component could help limit the destabilizing effect of too abrupt a downsizing exercise. In extremis, it could help Timorese security agencies to respond to security threats by providing support in such areas as logistics, transportation,

communications and information, in regard to which they will certainly require assistance for the next 12 months.

(*spoke in French*)

Member States have shown their keen and shared desire to continue to provide effective assistance to Timor-Leste. However, there are a number of different ideas on how best to do so. That is why we have submitted this report well in advance of the time when the Security Council must take its decision, on 20 May 2004. It is our hope that the proposals put forward today will assist in achieving consensus on those tasks which the United Nations Mission will be able effectively to carry out after 20 May 2004, and on the best way to do so, on the basis of the report and in a manner that meets with the full support of the host country.

The Security Council's ultimate decisions on support to Timor-Leste after 20 May 2004 will need to take into account developments on the ground between now — that is, mid-February — and May. There may be changes in the security situation, progress in the development of Timorese capability, and additional provisions relating to bilateral assistance from which Timor-Leste could benefit. In a number of areas, the decisions and actions taken by the Timorese political leadership will be crucial to the validity of these proposals, as is noted in the report. The Secretariat therefore intends to provide an additional report before the end of the present mandate that will update and fully inform the Council so that it can take its decisions accordingly.

It is doubtful whether any nation has ever advanced as rapidly as Timor-Leste along the path to self-sufficiency. This has permitted a swift downsizing in the international presence, as reflected in the charts attached to the Secretary-General's report. Clearly this illustrates the dynamic which underlies the transfer of responsibility to the authorities of Timor-Leste.

Nonetheless, there are always limits to what can be achieved in so short a period of time. It is our hope that the Security Council will give the fullest consideration to the proposals outlined in the Secretary-General's report. Those proposals represent a modest additional effort as compared to what has already been done, but we believe that they could play a decisive role in consolidating all that has been achieved so far.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Guéhenno for his briefing.

I wish to recall that there are 30 speakers scheduled for this morning. Many of them have indicated to me that they do not wish to speak at another meeting. Therefore, in accordance with the understanding reached among Council members, I wish to remind all speakers that, other than Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno and Foreign Minister Ramos-Horta of Timor-Leste, representatives' statements will be limited to no more than five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate their texts in writing and to deliver condensed versions when speaking in the Chamber. I thank them for their understanding and cooperation.

I now call on the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this public meeting on Timor-Leste. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his comprehensive briefing and wish to echo his words this morning concerning the need to avoid a premature and potentially destabilizing withdrawal of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET).

My delegation welcomes the presence among us of Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Timor-Leste, as well as of Ambassador João Augusto de Médicis, Executive Secretary of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP). Their contribution to our discussions will be of great importance.

I speak as the current Chairman of CPLP, in full coordination with Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins of Angola, a fellow member of the Council and of CPLP.

Brazil considers this agenda item to be highly important on account of the historic role played by the United Nations in the birth of independent Timor-Leste. This is a vivid example of how the United Nations can harness political will and financial and human resources in an effective way.

My Government is pleased to note that the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor stresses that much has been achieved in the areas of public administration,

serious crimes, internal security and Timor-Leste's relationship with Indonesia, which is based on friendship and mutual respect.

Notwithstanding several positive aspects, the report highlights that present deficiencies must be addressed with the continued support of the international community. UNMISET was planned on the basis that Timor-Leste would be in a position to achieve self-sufficiency within two years of its independence. However, as reflected in the Secretary-General's previous report, it has become increasingly clear that further assistance to Timor-Leste will be required in a number of areas after 20 May 2004, when UNMISET's mandate has been expected to expire.

As stated in the Secretary-General's special report, Timor-Leste's political institutions are gaining strength, but the early level of their development is a reminder of their fragility. Although acts of widespread violence have not occurred during the reporting period, the security situation in Timor-Leste continues to be jeopardized by destabilizing groups which continue to operate across the border in West Timor. Indeed, the Secretary-General's report points out that sightings of armed gangs and criminal elements in bordering districts have continued, as does the suspicion of possible preparations for destabilizing activity by other groups with unclear agendas. This morning, Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno has provided the Council with an example of why fears of destabilization still persist in East Timor. The Council is confronted here with the need to address a delicate balance.

In conformity with the report, Brazil strongly favours retaining a military component within UNMISET for a further 12-month consolidation phase, since Timorese capacity to respond to destabilizing activities still falls short of their security needs and capabilities. The visible presence of the UNMISET military component, supported by regular patrolling, will certainly continue to have a deterrent effect and help to maintain a calm environment in the country. An international presence for an additional year would allow Timor-Leste to reach a long-sought threshold of stability and development. Furthermore, the military component would also ensure the protection of United Nations equipment and personnel on the ground.

The national police of Timor-Leste (PNTL) has made significant strides these last three years towards assuming full responsibility for the maintenance of law and order. However, its capacity, experience and policy frameworks remain limited, particularly with regard to the special units. The Secretary-General's report acknowledges that it will not be possible to create an effective rapid deployment capability force within the PNTL to deal with armed groups in the border districts before 20 May 2004. International civilian police can make a crucial contribution towards building the capacity of PNTL as a non-political, professional police service.

Another critical area for the future of Timor-Leste is the strengthening of the rule of law. This is a precondition not only for promoting human rights, but also for laying solid groundwork for a sound economic system.

In the field of criminal justice, Timor-Leste still faces a dearth of judges, prosecutors, lawyers, investigators, forensic experts and interpreters. It is also important to address legal problems that might inhibit economic recovery and public safety, particularly the need for the adoption of the Civil Service Act, legislation against corruption and laws related to the armed forces and the police.

It is also essential to maintain the current level of public services. The deterioration of such services, which include health and education, would affect the most vulnerable and could constitute a blow to confidence in the future of Timor-Leste. In due time, it is also expected that the exploitation of oil and gas reserves will provide the Timorese Government with sound sources of revenue.

We have reached a critical juncture in Timor Leste. The international community has made an impressive investment in the future of the country and should continue to work in concert towards helping Timor-Leste's institutions to attain full-fledged sufficiency.

My Government supports the recommendation made by the Secretary-General that the Security Council extend the current mission for a further 12-month consolidation phase. UNMISET would continue to be headed by a special representative and the Mission would retain civilian, police and military components, although in a reduced and modified form, as outlined by the Secretary-General. The United Nations would closely monitor the needs of the Timorese Government so as to implement the downsizing of the configuration of UNMISET

accordingly. In the light of these considerations, I would like to point out that Brazil and CPLP believe that this debate may open the doors to the negotiation of a consensual resolution on the future of UNMISET, taking the Secretary-General's recommendations as a basis. Together with Angola, Brazil is ready to start negotiating a draft resolution.

The fact that Timor-Leste is a remarkable success story for the United Nations should not be overestimated by the international community. Much remains to be done. The struggle of the Timorese people for independence also serves as a catalyst for tackling challenges on the international agenda. The Security Council and other organs of the United Nations must continue to attach to Timor-Leste the high priority it deserves.

Mr. Duclos (France) (*spoke in French*): We wish to thank Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his extremely specific briefing, which will be most useful in our further considerations. The representative of Ireland will shortly make a statement on behalf of the European Union, which we fully endorse.

Like other delegations, we have many reasons to be pleased by events in Timor-Leste. First, we take the opportunity afforded by the presence of Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Timor-Leste, to express our gratification at the progress that has been made by the people of Timor-Leste since its accession to independence and the deployment of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET).

At the same time, along with that outstanding progress, there remain reasons for concern. I refer especially to the fact that, in some ways, the domestic security of the country is still fragile, due in particular to the activities of armed groups, which have already been mentioned. Externally, the armed forces of Timor-Leste are apparently unable to cope alone with potential serious border incidents. Finally, the issue of the repatriation of East Timorese refugees in West Timor remains a potential source of instability.

In that context, what should we do? France, for its part, supports an extension of UNMISET's mandate for a one-year period, as recommended by the Secretary-General. Such an extension should enable the United Nations to consolidate the gains achieved. In our view, we should reconfigure the mandate and emphasize assistance to Timor-Leste's authorities. The main ideas proposed by the Secretary-General seem relevant. UNMISET must continue to provide assistance to the country's judicial system and administrative agencies and must help to maintain security and stability by supporting in particular the training of Timor-Leste's police force.

At this stage, it is difficult to assess either the size or the components UNMISET will need after the extension and reconfiguration of its mandate. For our part, we have confidence in the proposals to be made by the Secretary-General when he indicates the format he believes to be best adapted to the needs on the ground. We should, of course, also be attentive to the concerns of the various parties involved and to the development of the situation on the ground.

In parallel, it remains important that we define a clear exit strategy. The extension of UNMISET's mandate must enable the United Nations to continue its disengagement. Clearly, it is essential that the Organization show its capacity to terminate its operations when the right conditions have been met and its capacity to extend stabilization efforts through development assistance and involvement by bilateral donors.

Thus, we should like to make a threefold suggestion. UNMISET's timetable should not exceed one year, depending, of course, on the situation on the ground. We believe that in order to hold to such a deadline, we should set out a precise troop-reduction schedule until UNMISET's ultimate withdrawal. Finally, we believe we should also continue to encourage the Timorese authorities to pursue their efforts with a view to consolidating the State and strengthening the country's independence.

Mr. Pleuger (Germany): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting and for inviting Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste, whose presence we welcome. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2004/117) and to thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for its comprehensive and able presentation this morning.

The representative of Ireland will make a statement on behalf of the European Union later in this debate, and we fully associate ourselves with that statement.

The report of the Secretary-General attests once more to the remarkable achievements of the people of Timor-Leste in building a peaceful and democratic society. They have been supported in their endeavour by Kamalesh Sharma, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and by all the staff of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET), to whom we owe great thanks. Because of their excellent and dedicated work, Timor-Leste is today generally considered to be a remarkable success story of the United Nations system.

We agree with the Secretary-General's observation that further assistance on the part of the international community will be essential to consolidate and build upon the achievements of the past 18 months and to tackle the remaining challenges in Timor-Leste. As the report rightly points out, the young institutions of this country still require United Nations support in a limited consolidation phase to assist in the further strengthening of Timor-Leste's judicial and security apparatuses. We therefore support the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend UNMISET for a further year in a reduced size and with a modified mandate.

As Ambassador Negroponte pointed out in our last meeting on this item, on 15 October 2003, the international community should remain engaged in ensuring the establishment of security and stability in East Timor after May. And while we share the view that there is a need for a continued international security component, Germany is quite flexible with regard to the adequate means.

Bearing in mind that the security threats — which the Secretary-General outlined in his report — are mostly of an internal dimension, we believe that the proposal submitted by Australia for an emergency security response indeed deserves consideration and would be well suited to meet the likely security challenges ahead. Such a force would have the particular expertise required for police work and would visibly reaffirm the international community's commitment to Timor-Leste. It would thus have the same psychological effect as a military force but might be more adequate than a military component in the already advanced state of nation-building in Timor-Leste.

On the other hand, we take note of the Secretary-General's recommendation that a security component, comprising some 310 military personnel, be deployed to provide protection for 42 military liaison officers, to maintain a reassuring presence in the border regions and to provide a quick-reaction capability if required. We also take note of the fact that the Government of Timor-Leste has expressed a clear preference for an even larger military component.

From our point of view, it is now of paramount importance to maintain the unity of the Security Council that has been contributing so much to the success in Timor-Leste. We must not jeopardize what has been achieved with so much effort and dedication. Germany is therefore prepared to join a consensus along the lines suggested by the Secretary-General — including with regard to the military component — if the Security Council can agree on a continued peacekeeping force element in Timor-Leste. Otherwise, perhaps a compromise could be found by adding a number of armed international police forces, provided countries are willing to contribute in that regard, and reducing the suggested number of envisaged military personnel.

The international community is now in the favourable position that in any event, only a substantially diminished United Nations presence will be required after 20 May 2004. The question of whether such international security assistance will be provided by armed police or by an armed military component seems to me more of a technical than of a political nature. And I am confident that this issue will not prevent us from finding a consensual solution that is practical, efficient and adequate.

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno for presenting the report of 13 February on Timor-Leste (S/2004/117). We are particularly grateful for the presence of Minister José Ramos-Horta, with whose country Chile has deep ties of friendship. We appreciate the analysis of the Secretary-General's technical assessment mission of early January, which evaluated on the ground the assistance necessary for strengthening Timor-Leste's democratic foundations and provided projections for such assistance beyond May of this year.

I would like to begin by expressing support for the Secretary-General's proposal to extend the current United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor

(UNMISET) for a further 12-month consolidation stage.

In connection with the first programme outlined in the report (S/2004/117), my delegation completely agrees that providing assistance to the justice system and administrative structures is essential for the viability and political stability of Timor-Leste. We are concerned about delays in the administration of justice and shortcomings in human rights procedures, and we agree that capacities in this field must be strengthened.

In connection with the second programme, the training of the police force, we agree that we must continue to contribute to and support the process of training the National Police of Timor-Leste. We particularly appreciate the fact that 3,024 members of the police force are already patrolling, in every district in the country. However, we understand that the National Police needs to continue its training, with a particular view to achieving a higher level of professionalism, effectiveness and responsibility. We believe it is also essential that intensive training of the Rapid Intervention Unit continue and that UNMISET maintain assessment and monitoring personnel in that field.

In connection with the third programme, namely the maintenance of external security, we agree that this is a central element in achieving stability in Timor-Leste. We resolutely support the Secretary-General's proposal in this regard, as we deem it both appropriate and realistic. We believe that the deployment of 42 military liaison officers to monitor the security situation and support demarcation activities is a good measure, as is the deployment of a military force to support the work of those officers. A total military peacekeeping component of about 350 troops seems to us to be reasonable.

We are pleased to note the excellent communication and cooperation between Timor-Leste and Indonesia and their mutual commitments in the political field. We hope that an agreement on provisional border demarcation will soon be reached and that the perpetrators of serious crimes will be brought to justice. We also hope for continued bilateral strengthening, since this will without a doubt further the consolidation of stability in Timor-Leste.

In the field of human rights, we appreciate the assistance that UNMISET has provided in the investigation of crimes committed in 1999, investigations that have led to 81 indictments. Assistance will be needed to complete all investigations of serious crimes. This will undoubtedly promote greater confidence in the justice system and strengthen the message that those who commit such crimes will not enjoy impunity. Here, we particularly value the work accomplished by the Commission on Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation, and we hope that it will continue its investigations with a view to issuing a report by the end of October this year.

Lastly, we reiterate our view that, in order for UNMISET's task to be completed and for continued support to be brought to the task of consolidating and broadening the achievements made, the mandate should be renewed for an additional year, reducing the mission's size and modifying its mandate. We hope that the Council will display unity in supporting this proposal for the benefit of Timor-Leste and its people.

Mr. Baja (Philippines): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this public meeting of the Security Council on East Timor. We also thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for his comprehensive and positive briefing on East Timor, and we welcome the Foreign Minister of East Timor, Mr. José Ramos-Horta, to our meeting.

At this stage, we can justifiably consider the case of East Timor as a model of United Nations involvement that is close to being a success. The odyssey started with the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) in 1999, followed by the Security Council-authorized International Force in East Timor (INTERFET) also in that year; then came the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) in 2000 and, now, the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET). The Under-Secretary-General has articulated the achievements of the United Nations presence there.

Notwithstanding the gains made by East Timor and UNMISET, there remain areas of concern that could necessitate a continued United Nations presence in East Timor in order to build a stable and sustainable democracy. Foremost among those concerns is the maintenance of peace and security. We believe that an immediate pullout of the international military and police presence there might create a security vacuum in the country. A continued United Nations security presence there, however, will be able to deal, under

East Timor's operational leadership, with law enforcement activities and to take care of possible disturbances from remnants of the anti-independence militia and other criminal elements. This security presence will also be able to assist in the continued development of the East Timor National Police and provide protection to United Nations military liaison officers. It will also be able to assist in institutional capacity-building to ensure the stability and functioning of Government in civil administration.

East Timor has requested a continued military presence and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has recommended such an extension for another year, in a reduced size and with a modified mandate. We urge the Security Council to head East Timor's requests and vision and to support the professional advice and recommendations of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

East Timor boasts a committed team of leaders who not only are politically astute and mature but also understand the challenges confronting their newly independent country and are aware of the responsibilities involved in ensuring its sustainable development. East Timor inner strength also comes from the resolve of its people to survive.

Nevertheless, efforts to create means for sustainable development and secure economic growth must be provided. The country is one of the least endowed on Earth. Its population is heterogeneous in language and culture. The country does not as yet have major industries; unemployment is high; and the infrastructure is poorly developed. Hope for economic salvation lies in expected revenues from oil and natural gas in the Timor Sea, but as revenues from this source have been delayed, the assistance of United Nations agencies, bilateral donors and the Asian Development Bank must be maintained. There is also an urgent need to concentrate on human resources development, particularly in developing mandatory basic education and in imbuing the people of Timor-Leste with entrepreneurial skills.

Other key areas for assistance, as referred to by the Under-Secretary-General, include the management of public finances and the justice system. The judiciary, owing to the incomplete legal and procedural framework in which it operates, is not yet fully capable of implementing the rule of law in a manner consistent with international human rights standards. This includes the conduct of serious-crimes investigations and proceedings.

East Timor's political and economic growth, however, relies on a global consensus on the need to assist the country. Japan, Australia, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries and the European Union are important contributors to the creation of a viable nation. Indonesia is a key neighbouring, and my delegation notes the growing progress in the relations between Indonesia and East Timor.

At the tenth ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) ministerial meeting, held on 18 June 2003, the ministers issued a paragraph on East Timor, which reads:

> "The Ministers congratulated the Government of Timor-Leste on its progress since independence. In particular, the Ministers noted the positive relationship developing between Timor-Leste and Indonesia. They noted that a number of ARF participants continued to make major contributions to the post-independence multilateral effort in Timor-Leste. The Ministers stressed that, as part of the Asia-Pacific, Timor-Leste's future was reliant on the development of economic, political and security ties with its neighbours."

We also note that a joint border commission has been established by Indonesia and Timor-Leste to take care of border and refugee concerns, among other issues. A joint bilateral commission has also been created to monitor and address other issues of common concern. There have also been high-level visits between the two countries, and they have just recently concluded negotiations on an air services agreement that is now ready for signing by the respective Governments.

In baseball, one has to touch home plate in order to score a run and to win. East Timor is already on third base and in the final inning. It needs to score a run. We urge the Security Council to help East Timor to win by extending UNMISET for another year, as recommended by the Secretary-General. Then, when the success story of East Timor is told, it will be a tale of how the United Nations, through the Security Council and UNMISET, and the international community as a whole, helped East Timor to stand on its feet, make the decisive run and win against all odds.

Ms. Menéndez (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation, too, welcomes the presence here of Foreign Minister Ramos-Horta. Spain is also grateful for the excellent, detailed and comprehensive report of the Secretary-General (S/2004/117), which takes into account the conclusions of the technical assessment mission of the Secretariat that was conducted last month. We are also grateful to Mr. Guéhenno for his briefing.

The report of the Secretary-General contains an assessment of the achievements made by Timor-Leste, with the support of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET), and proposes the extension of the mission's mandate for one year, as well as the modification of the mandate and a reduction in the size of the mission, in order to meet the objectives initially established and to ensure that Timor-Leste can be self-sufficient.

Spain fully supports the recommendations of the Secretary-General in all their aspects, including the maintenance of a reduced military component within UNMISET, composed of both military observers and troops, with a view to ensuring the stability and security of Timor-Leste. Indeed, the additional measures proposed in the report — comparatively modest when compared with earlier efforts — will be indispensable if we are to ensure the successful consolidation of the institutions of Timor-Leste and prevent backsliding. Clearly, the cooperation of the Timorese institutions will also be necessary; they still have important tasks to carry out, such as the enactment of key legislation with regard to officials, human rights, anti-corruption activities, the police and defence.

We are pleased by the excellent communication between the Governments of Timor-Leste and of Indonesia, and we hope that they will be able to complete work on two essential issues: the delimitation of the land border, and the continued presence of 28,000 refugees in the western part of the island. As the Secretary-General rightly pointed out in his report, the situation will remain volatile until the problem is resolved.

Of the three elements of the Secretary-General's proposals for UNMISET, there can be no doubt about that relating to the maintenance of security and stability. Those who — perhaps with excessive optimism — believe that there are no potential risks that would warrant a small peacekeeping force seem to be forgetting that there are still certain elements that could destabilize the country after May 2004, such as cross-border infiltration by hundreds of former militia members. Spain therefore supports the Secretary-General's assessment that

> "The ability of Timorese agencies to respond without assistance to security incidents would be very limited at a time when they are thinly stretched and poorly supported, their responsibilities are ill-defined, and their relations with their Indonesian counterparts are at an early and fragile stage of development". (*S/2004/117, para. 49*)

Thus, maintaining a military component in UNMISET for just one more year will undoubtedly reduce the risk of destabilizing incidents, in particular in the western districts. Furthermore, it would make it possible to consolidate stability and increase local confidence at the same time as the East Timor security agencies develop their own capabilities and their relations with their Indonesian counterparts.

In conclusion, we would like to point out that the United Nations has made an enormous effort to help and defend the people of Timor-Leste through three peacekeeping missions and the organization of a referendum. The donor conference yielded many proposals for development, institution-building, poverty alleviation and training. We have invested too much to lose what has been gained from one of the most gratifying and satisfying experiences in this Organization's history. Spain once again wishes every success for Timor-Leste.

Finally, we would like to say that we support the statement to be made later by the representative of Ireland on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Konuzin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to welcome our distinguished guest, Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste. We are grateful to Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for having introduced the special report of the Secretary-General on Timor-Leste and for the detailed information he provided on developments in the situation in that country.

We note the ongoing stabilization of the situation in Timor-Leste and the successes of the Timorese

authorities, with the active and vital support of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET), in ensuring the establishment and development of State institutions in the country. Of particular importance for achieving the genuine self-sufficiency and viability of the young State is progress towards the creation and further strengthening of the security sector in the country.

We note the conclusion, in December 2003, of the process of transferring responsibility for law and order throughout the country's territory from UNMISET to the National Police of Timor-Leste. We also note that the Timor-Leste authorities and the Border Patrol Unit have undertaken control functions along the Tactical Coordination Line between Timor-Leste and Indonesia. We have a positive view of UNMISET's efforts to prepare and train the Timorese military and police forces.

We welcome the continued development of Timorese-Indonesian relations, particularly with regard to such a key issue as the demarcation and settlement of their common border. The wish expressed by both parties to establish genuinely good-neighbourly and mutually advantageous relations allows us to hope for a speedy solution to the outstanding questions, including the problem of the 28,000 Timorese refugees now on Indonesian territory. From the point of view of the economic development of Timor-Leste, the positive steps in bilateral negotiations with Australia on the demarcation of those underwater areas containing oil resources are significant.

At the same time, despite the unquestionable achievements, Timor-Leste continues to experience serious problems, particularly in such vital areas as the establishment of State administration and the strengthening of the potential for internal and external security, where the State agencies now being formed are still rather fragile. Timor-Leste is yet another example of the fact that the process of establishing Statehood is extremely complex and labour-intensive and cannot be artificially squeezed into rigid existing patterns and frameworks.

In those conditions the international community, which has made great efforts and has expended considerable resources to achieve this final success in Timor-Leste, must not endanger this project, which has provided independence to the people of Timor-Leste and enabled them to be integrated into the family of nations on a equal footing. Russia supports the proposal to extend for one year the activity of all three components of UNMISET, with reduced staffing, and believes that this measure is most fully in keeping with the interests of a settlement in Timor-Leste. Moreover, this is precisely what the leadership of Timor-Leste has asked the United Nations to do.

Mr. Motoc (Romania): I too wish to welcome His Excellency, Foreign Minister Ramos-Horta, and through him to congratulate the authorities of Timor-Leste for their steady efforts and encouraging achievements. I also thank the Secretary-General for his special report on the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET), and Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his briefing.

Romania aligns itself with the statement to be made shortly by the Irish Presidency on behalf of the European Union. Therefore I shall confine myself to only a few specific comments.

I will start by pointing out Romania's confidence in Timor-Leste's future. With the present UNMISET playing a valuable role, remarkable progress has been made in strengthening political institutions, consolidating governmental authority, promoting regional and international cooperation and upholding democratic principles and personal freedom. The Government in Dili has demonstrated strong commitment towards developing the country as a stable and democratic nation.

Nevertheless, areas remain in which national efforts could and should be assisted by the United Nations beyond the present UNMISET mandate. These include consolidating the rule of law, developing civil society, promoting political dialogue and strengthening the democratic institutions. Quick and resolute actions by the Government are still required to develop the administration's legislative and regulatory framework, conduct investigations of past serious crimes and enhance observance of human rights and of the rule of law.

Good-neighbourly relations with Indonesia should be further pursued and strengthened. We call on both sides to finalize the border delimitation as soon as possible and to facilitate the return of former refugees. Furthermore, we encourage increased bilateral cooperation on security and justice. That will pave the way to consolidation of confidence and stability and,

implicitly, an improved climate for economic development.

Romania favours on-going support by the international community in Timor-Leste. The Security Council, bilateral donors and the wider international community have invested enormous energy and expectations in that country. The gains achieved to date must be consolidated and expanded to secure their irreversibility. In this regard, we welcome the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his latest report (S/2004/117). In that document he has pointed out that a modest additional effort will definitely make a crucial difference.

We support the extension of the United Nations presence in Timor-Leste beyond 20 May. The three months ahead of us will allow for the identification of the best way ahead. We believe that the reduced post-UNMISET presence, with a clear mandate, will give the people and Government of Timor-Leste greater confidence to continue the necessary efforts and reforms. We are convinced that the good prospects for development of Timorese self-sufficiency will pave the way for the United Nations soon to leave behind a notable account of success as our legacy there.

Finally, I wish to underline that Romania's genuine attachment to democratic transformation in Timor-Leste stems from its own experience with the challenges of transition. For us, this is one more reason to see it as a moral duty to support Timor-Leste's speedy and sustainable transformation into a stable, democratic and prosperous country.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): May I first thank Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his briefing and his analysis. We thank the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) and Mr. Sharma for the excellent work accomplished. I also want to welcome the presence of Mr. Ramos-Horta, Minister for Foreign Affairs. He is one of the emblematic figures in the struggle of the Timorese people for independence.

Since its accession to independence in 2002, Timor-Leste has made remarkable achievements, as the Secretary-General recognized in his report. In the course of recent months, its security situation has improved, its political institutions are being strengthened and its relations with its neighbours are steadily developing. Progress has been made in bilateral relations with Indonesia, and we welcome that, particularly the work to delimit the land borders between the two countries. We hope that the agreement on the international land border will soon be finalized. We appeal to the two Governments to do further work to promote the resettlement of East Timorese returning from West Timor and to facilitate the return of refugees. We hope for a definitive solution to that problem.

In spite of these achievements, there are still important challenges to be met, particularly with regard to the maintenance of national security and stability and in the promotion of economic and social development. This is completely normal for a country that has just recently recovered its independence. In fact, to improve capacity in public administration, to establish and develop a justice system and strengthen the police and national defence forces all require long-term efforts. That is why it is essential that the United Nations and the international community continue to support Timor-Leste.

As the Secretary-General indicated in his report, following the end of the UNMISET mandate, there will still be needs to be met in a certain number of fields. In this regard, Algeria believes that the United Nations should maintain a mission, with a clear mandate approved by the Security Council, in order to help improve the justice system and the structures of public administration and to contribute to the development of the national police and to the maintenance of security and stability in Timor-Leste.

In that respect, we fully understand the concerns of the Government of Timor-Leste with regard to problems that could threaten the stability of the country, and we believe that it is the duty of the international community to continue to support that young State during the crucial stage of the establishment of its institutions.

In that connection, we support the recommendations of the Secretary-General that UNMISET's mandate be extended for a 12-month period and that the United Nations maintain an appropriate presence to respond to the country's security needs, as envisaged by the Secretariat, with, we hope, the unanimous support of the Security Council.

The strengthening and consolidation of peace represent a major challenge for the international community. It is therefore important that the United

Nations see to it that peace and development take root in a sustainable manner in Timor-Leste. In other words, it would be neither just nor reasonable for Timor-Leste to be penalized for having succeeded in its transition and for the international community to disengage itself too quickly from that country — something that it would eventually regret.

Mr. Thomson (United Kingdom): We thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for his briefing, and we welcome Foreign Minister Ramos-Horta. We look forward to hearing what he has to say to the Council.

The Irish Presidency will later in this debate be making a statement on behalf of the European Union to which the United Kingdom fully subscribes.

We join others in paying tribute to the progress achieved in Timor-Leste over the past two years. It is a testament to the spirit and determination of the Timorese people. We wish also to acknowledge the contribution that the United Nations has made under the able leadership of Kamalesh Sharma.

It is clear already from statements this morning that all agree with Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno not only that there has been remarkable progress but also that further international assistance to Timor-Leste remains essential. The United Kingdom wishes to support the clear emerging consensus that the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) should be extended for one further year, in a reduced and modified form, in a consolidation phase.

As others have also said, however, much remains to be done. There is clear continuing work for UNMISET, and there are also areas where we would like to see the Timorese make further progress, for example, by passing the Civil Service Act, by establishing the Office of the Provedor for Human Rights and Justice, by making a commitment to rooting out corruption, and by giving greater urgency and commitment to the creation of an appropriate investment culture.

We are concerned, too, about the poor relations between the Timorese police and defence forces and would urge the Timorese Government to address this as a matter of urgency. We encourage the Government to pass police and defence bills and clearly to delineate the roles of the police and defence forces.

We share the Secretary-General's concern about the overall weakness of the Timorese police and defence forces, and we remain committed to working, both bilaterally and through the United Nations, to assist the Government of Timor-Leste in strengthening those institutions. We particularly welcome the establishment of the independent inquiry into the incident in Los Palos and hope this will be transparent and impartial.

On the police side, the United Kingdom has been working with Australia and the Timorese Government on a programme for training and assistance to the police. In that context, we would like to request the Secretariat to coordinate plans for policing assistance now rather than reviewing the question in December, in order to determine appropriate numbers of police advisers and to avoid any possible duplication.

Like other speakers, we are pleased at progress in establishing good relations with Indonesia and at the transformation of Timor-Leste's external threat environment. We urge Timor-Leste and Indonesia to reach early agreement on their land border and encourage both countries to continue to work together to resolve the question of the resettlement of former refugees and the outstanding cases of Timorese children separated from their families.

We agree with others who have spoken previously that we should not jeopardize the successful investment which the international community has made in Timor-Leste, and we look forward to further discussion of the Secretary-General's recommendations for a United Nations presence beyond May 2004. We recognize that there are remaining security concerns and concerns about the preparedness of the police to deal with security incidents. We therefore believe that the follow-on mission should include a security element with a focus on policing. We continue to support a police back-up model along the lines proposed by Australia.

Mr. Adechi (Benin) (*spoke in French*): We would like to associate ourselves with previous speakers in warmly welcoming the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Timor-Leste, Mr. José Ramos-Horta. We would like also to thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his outstanding introduction of the report of the Secretary-General on the commendable work of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET).

The Council thus has before it an unvarnished picture of the achievements and the difficulties that characterize the daunting task undertaken in Timor-Leste by the United Nations. Thanks to the unswerving commitment of the United Nations standing by their side, the people of Timor-Leste have, ex nihilo, achieved indisputable progress in all areas under consideration. Such progress is a valuable asset, and we encourage all political players in Timor-Leste to maintain the current dynamic.

We are fully aware of the major challenges that must still be met by the authorities of the youngest State in the world in establishing solid and lasting democratic institutions that guarantee peace, security and stability in the country.

We are also fully aware of the determination of the authorities of Timor-Leste to do everything in their power to build a nation that is at peace with itself and which has good relations with its neighbours — a nation fully committed to struggling against poverty and for a better future. To achieve that major objective, the problems noted must be dealt with all due attention, and all necessary human and material resources must be made available.

The Government of Timor-Leste, which has our full confidence, deserves resolute support in order that it may continue its work and undertake the necessary measures. Here it is of critical importance to strengthen the capacity of the Administration and the judiciary by resorting, when necessary, to external technical assistance. The Security Council should consider ways and means of helping to speed up the processing of cases involving serious crimes, in the framework of the combat against impunity, since the overwhelming majority of indicted individuals are outside the country.

From another point of view, we believe that the problem of defining the respective roles of the national police and armed forces of Timor-Leste in the maintenance of internal security is crucial and that a solution to that problem is decisive for maintaining the democratic nature of the political system in Timor-Leste.

The circumstances of the birth of the State of Timor-Leste require it to have a national army with sufficient resources to ward off external threats, whatever their provenance. It is with real satisfaction that we note the efforts being made jointly by the authorities of Timor-Leste and Indonesia to establish active bilateral cooperation based on good-neighbourliness, mutual respect and mutual benefit.

My delegation sees here an outstanding example of post-conflict reconciliation. In that respect, we note that the Secretary-General has called for close cooperation between the forces of Timor-Leste and of Indonesia in order to ensure the security of border regions. That concern reflects the situation in the region resulting from the existence of reactionary and uncontrollable armed groups. Given that situation and that threat, a diversification of support for the armed forces of Timor-Leste is fully indicated.

It is fortunate that the Secretary-General has been able to provide in his report a specific idea of the needs to be met within a rather tight, yet energizing timetable. We support such relevant recommendations advocating an extension and modification of UNMISET's mandate to ensure an international presence for an additional one-year period, as requested by the Government of Timor-Leste.

Regarding recovery, reconstruction and economic and social development, Timor-Leste now falls into the category of least developed country. This fact was duly consecrated by the adoption of General Assembly resolution 58/112 of 17 December 2003. We believe that this shows an awareness of how much work remains in the economic and social development of the country. We are confident that the advantages deriving from least-developed-country status can allow Timor-Leste to enjoy increased support from the international community in the areas of international trade, development financing and technical cooperation in a well-defined framework with regular follow-up.

The progress registered and the clear determination of the authorities of Timor-Leste to establish democracy and justice form a solid basis for creating a strong partnership with all development partners. We are convinced that peace, political stability, security and economic development are inextricably interlinked, as we have often said and as bears reiterating in the specific case of Timor-Leste.

It is true that the people and Government of Timor-Leste are primarily responsible for building viable and democratic institutions. My delegation is convinced, however, that the international community must resolutely pursue the task begun two years ago in Timor-Leste and stand beside the people of that

country in its steadfast march towards social progress and sustainable development.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): I would like to start by thanking you, Sir, for convening this morning's meeting on the situation in Timor-Leste. The entire international community can rightly share in the successes achieved by the people of Timor-Leste. Timor-Leste is indeed one of the most recent and remarkable success stories of our times.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report and, particularly, Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno for the inputs he has made, which will facilitate our discussion this morning.

I would also like to say that we are very pleased to see Minister Ramos-Horta among us this morning to grace our discussions. We would also like to say that we align ourselves fully, as a member of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP), with the statement that will be made later by Ambassador João Augusto de Médicis, Executive Secretary of CPLP.

My delegation is greatly encouraged by the steady progress accomplished by Timor-Leste since its people decided with unshakeable courage and determination to embark on the path to independent nationhood. The Security Council is discussing today how best to assist the Timorese people and that young nation across a crucial threshold of its history. The United Nations is called on once again to continue playing a decisive role, as it has in the recent past, in building a future of security, justice and prosperity for Timor-Leste.

The Department of Peacekeeping Operations has been an instrumental element of such endeavours by carefully checking on the present and future needs of the Timorese people and by providing a careful assessment of the situation of the country. Despite the fact that Timor-Leste is experiencing a remarkable period of peace and stability, it still faces a relatively fragile environment for a sustainable trend towards progress and development. The main institutions of the State — the defence forces, the police and the judicial system — still need external assistance and consolidation, as the report of the Secretary-General recognizes, recommending a continuing international presence in Timor-Leste.

We fully agree with the principles outlined in the report on the need for further United Nations assistance to Timor-Leste so as to consolidate and build upon the gains achieved so far. We also concur with the recommendation contained in the report that the Security Council should consider the extension of the current Mission in Timor-Leste for a further 12-month period — a "consolidation phase". This calls for a modified mandate providing assistance to the justice system and to the core administrative structures and contributing to the continued development of the national police and to the maintenance of security and stability in Timor-Leste, as has been proposed. My delegation will be ready to participate, in due time, in the discussion of such a draft resolution.

It is my delegation's view that the implementation of those proposals would provide a realistic framework for consolidating the situation in Timor-Leste, for successfully concluding the work of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor, and for contributing to the building of a democratic and stable society.

We share the common view that Timor-Leste still needs to acquire the capability to secure its self-defence. Therefore, as proposed by the Secretary-General, the presence of a minor contingent is quite in line with the reality on the ground. We welcome the assessment of the Timorese authorities of the good faith and political will demonstrated by the Indonesian Government in preventing the use of its territory for acts of destabilization against Timor-Leste. In that regard, we deem it essential, in order to create appropriate conditions for the sustained stability and development of Timor-Leste, that relations between the two countries continue to improve — and to improve steadily — and that they establish good-neighbourly relations of a permanent character as a prerequisite for Timor-Leste's facing the future with confidence as a country fully integrated into its geographical, cultural and geostrategic environment.

We have also followed with great interest and commend the authorities in Dili for the establishment of good relations with all the countries of the region. Australia, as a key partner in the region, can continue in the future to play a role, particularly assisting in strengthening the institutions of the country. That should be viewed as a complementary effort towards further strengthening the security and other sectors of the country.

In conclusion, I would like to express my delegation's full agreement with the proposals and recommendations contained in the special report of the Secretary-General, in the expectation that they will meet with the approval of the Security Council and of all the countries constituting the main stakeholders in the situation in Timor-Leste. That would be a contribution to regional peace, stability and a future of democracy and development for Timor-Leste.

Mr. Holliday (United States of America): We welcome the Foreign Minister of East Timor, Mr. José Ramos-Horta. We also thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno and Special Representative Sharma for their continued efforts to advance political and economic development in East Timor.

The United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) is a success, and the United States has been a strong supporter of the efforts of East Timor to build a free and more hopeful future. While progress is being achieved, we recognize that much remains to be done. As a result, we agree with the Secretary-General that UNMISET should be extended past May 2004, at reduced levels, to consolidate gains made during the past two years of the Mission. We applaud the progress made by the Government and the people of East Timor in the development of a civil administration. As the Secretary-General reports, however, the East Timor administration continues to have limited capacity. We also welcome the proposal for continuation of a limited number of civilian experts in East Timor's ministries. We expect that any assistance of this type past May 2005 would be provided through normal bilateral and multilateral donor support, rather than through a United Nations peacekeeping operation.

In his report (S/2004/117), the Secretary-General states that a critical element in bolstering East Timor security is the passage of legislation and the adoption of regulations and policies defining the roles of, and relations among, the various East Timorese security forces. As we stated in October, the Government of East Timor should do its part to nurture respect for the rule of law, including taking action to address allegations of police misconduct. We encourage the Government of East Timor to take those necessary steps as soon as possible. The human rights violations committed in East Timor in 1999 have not been forgotten. The process of accountability for those atrocities should achieve its intended goal, and that is justice.

The security situation in East Timor is still fragile. The Council will need to consider in the coming weeks how best to meet the future security needs of East Timor. We believe that there are issues that remain unresolved regarding the strengthening of police capability. In that regard, we believe that the police component of the Australian proposal is very important.

Mr. Khalid (Pakistan): First, I join others in thanking Mr. Guéhenno for his briefing. I also take this opportunity to welcome Foreign Minister Ramos-Horta in our midst.

The mandate of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) is due to expire in three months. And, as the report of the Secretary-General (S/2004/117) states, formidable challenges remain as this mandate draws to a close. While we understand that Timor-Leste will continue to receive assistance and support from a variety of international sources, we believe that there will be a need for a continued United Nations presence beyond May 2004.

As an Asian country, Pakistan has strong affiliations with the region. As a troop contributor to both the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) and UNMISET, we regard ourselves as a stakeholder in the peace and the stability of Timor-Leste. Our approach to the future of the United Nations presence in Timor-Leste is guided by the following principles.

First, no peacekeeping operation should be terminated or withdrawn without completing the task assigned to it. As the Ambassador of Algeria has said, the United Nations must not prematurely disengage itself from Timor-Leste.

Secondly, while national security, both internal and external, is the responsibility of every sovereign State, in post-conflict situations such as that in Timor-Leste, there is still a need for a continuing, even if symbolic, United Nations presence to provide a sense of security to the people and a deterrence against those who wish to undermine the country's peace and stability.

Thirdly, we welcome the improvement of relations between Indonesia and Timor-Leste, and we think that it is a prerequisite for the success of the

political process in the region. The confidence-building tasks begun by UNMISET still need to be consolidated.

Fourthly, the safety and security of peacekeepers, including unarmed military and civilian personnel, is paramount in any peacekeeping operation. It is our experience in United Nations peacekeeping missions that formed military units are best equipped to carry out that task.

Fifthly, the neutrality and impartiality of United Nations personnel is paramount and must not be compromised in any way. At no point can United Nations peacekeepers, for any reason, be placed even indirectly at the disposal of a sovereign Government.

Based on the above principles, Pakistan will support the extension of UNMISET with the reduced size and the modified mandate proposed by the Secretary-General. We would also support the continuation of a United Nations military presence as a token of our collective commitment to peace and stability in Timor-Leste for its deterrent value against any threat, as well as for the protection of remaining UNMISET personnel.

Pakistan looks forward to working with other Council members to reach an early agreement on UNMISET's future composition and mandate.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of China.

I thank the Secretary-General for his report on the question of Timor-Leste (S/2004/117) and thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for his briefing. I welcome once again, to today's meeting, Mr. Ramos-Horta, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste.

Since Timor-Leste became an independent State in May 2002, the Government and the people of Timor-Leste, with the help of the international community, have made significant progress on various aspects of national development. Their external relations continue to develop. They have also established extensive relationships with international organizations, including the United Nations. We express our satisfaction at all those gratifying achievements and extend our congratulations to the Timorese Government and people. We also appreciate the positive role played by the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) in that process.

As was noted in the report of the Secretary-General, despite extraordinary achievements, Timor-Leste is still faced with many challenges at a time when UNMISET's current mandate is drawing to a close. Indeed, as a new nation, Timor-Leste faces a long and arduous task to achieve overall social stability and sustainable economic development. In order to consolidate the gains that have been made and to enable the country to attain complete self-sufficiency at an early date, the Government and the people of Timor-Leste, on the one hand, should exert greater efforts in all areas of national development, and the international community, on the other, should continue to provide Timor-Leste with necessary support and assistance.

We fully understand the request of the Timorese Government that the United Nations continue to maintain its presence in Timor-Leste. We support the recommendation of the Secretary-General that the mandate of UNMISET be extended for a further year, and we agree with the proposal to make appropriate modifications to its size and mandate. We hope that the Security Council can reach consensus on the future arrangement of the Mission in time, before 20 May 2004. Clearly, that will be essential for the further development and the stability of Timor-Leste.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

As another measure to optimize the use of our time, I will not individually invite speakers to take seats at the table and invite them to resume their seats at the side. When a speaker takes the floor, the Conference Officer will seat the next speaker on the list at the table. I thank everyone for their understanding and cooperation.

I call now on His Excellency Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste.

Mr. Ramos-Horta (Timor-Leste): I thank you, Sir, and all the other members of the Council for inviting me to speak here today. I am particularly pleased that it is during your presidency that the Council is once again considering the situation in Timor-Leste. In view of your long involvement in and experience with the issue of Timor-Leste since you came to the United Nations as a young diplomat, we feel even more confident that, under your leadership, the Security Council will once again arrive at a

consensus on a continuing United Nations role in Timor-Leste.

In view of time constraints — and despite your generosity, Sir, in allowing me additional time for my statement — I shall skip many pages of my written text; the full text will be circulated to members. I shall endeavour to address the substance of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2004/117).

First, I would like to congratulate the Secretary-General and his staff on that outstanding presentation. I myself could not have made a better analysis of the situation in Timor-Leste, and I think the Secretariat deserves high commendation for its professionalism. Because of their having dealt with Timor-Leste for many years, they truly understand the realities, the challenges and the problems that we face — although I would not subscribe to the report 100 per cent. I probably would not subscribe to the Bible 100 per cent, so I hope no one will take it too personally that I subscribe not to 100 per cent of the report but to perhaps 99 per cent of it.

The report refers to some key areas where we have made progress, on which I shall not elaborate now. It refers also to shortcomings in other areas, and we are prepared to accept our failings and weaknesses resulting, first, from the very fact that we have been independent for less than two years; none of us had ever governed a country before, whether in the previous five years or in the previous 500 years under various colonial experiments in our country. Those failings have to do also with the lack of trained personnel for the administration, particularly in the key area where we acknowledge that we are most fragile: the justice sector.

With regard to that sector, it is noted that the Timorese side has much to do to strengthen its law enforcement agencies, particularly the police. In the past year and a half, our Government has invested enormous effort in strengthening the judiciary and the public administration. We believe that those two areas constitute the foundation for peace and security in our country, for development and for creating a climate of confidence for investors.

The report of the Secretary-General recommends a continuation of the United Nations presence in the territory, based on three components. There seems to be no disagreement on two components, but there appears to be some on the continuation of a peacekeeping component in the territory. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) — which have dealt with the situation in Timor-Leste since 1999 — seem to know the situation very well because of their close observation of the conditions and the realities in the country: the weaknesses of our police force and defence force; the dynamics of our politics; the tensions in the border area; the unresolved issue of certain elements of militia gangs; the unresolved issue of the refugees; and the still uncompleted talks between us and Indonesia on the land border.

The land border is a porous one. We acknowledge the good will and leadership of the Indonesian side in addressing the refugee problem and, along with us, towards concluding negotiations on land demarcation. However, as the report of the Secretary-General notes, the two sides — Indonesia and Timor-Leste — have failed so far on three occasions to meet our own deadline for signing an agreement on border demarcation. But there is political will and determination on the part of Timor-Leste and Indonesia to continue the talks and to conclude the border demarcation. On both sides, border demarcation would help resolve some of the issues of illegal cross-border activities.

Peace is a reality in Timor-Leste, as the report of the Secretary-General and many observers acknowledge. But it has also been acknowledged — and we ourselves acknowledge — that peace is still very fragile in our country. So are the institutions of law and order and the institutions of the State public administration. Therefore, the Government of Timor-Leste, through our Prime Minister in a letter to the Secretary-General (S/2004/114), has appealed for the continuation of a peacekeeping component in a new United Nations mission in Timor-Leste. We leave it to the Secretariat and the members of the Council to decide on the exact size of that peacekeeping component, but it is our informed view — in the light of the dynamics of the reality on the ground and in the light of our experience, backed up by experience in many other conflict situations — that a peacekeeping component provides the best deterrence against any potential violent conflict. We do not wish to underrate an international police force, but a police force does not have the same credibility or impact as a formed military unit.

Obviously, we do not anticipate any external threat. But can it be said that we are exaggerating the potential threats in Timor-Leste? If we are, maybe it is better and wiser to exaggerate and be over-cautious than, because of other cost-saving calculations, to witness a precipitate, too-early reduction of the United Nations presence in the country.

It is for that reason — the respect that the people of Timor-Leste has acquired with regard to a peacekeeping force in the country — that we believe that such a force provides the best deterrence to ensure peace and security and to give the international community and the Timorese Government time and space to strengthen our police force and our defence force, which we believe would be able completely to take over all responsibilities by May 2005.

I have spoken here on numerous occasions in the past. On all those occasions, one individual would sit next to me, often here on my right. That individual was Sergio Vieira de Mello. He was our most eloquent, passionate advocate. I recall that the Council always went along with his very persuasive arguments on engaging the United Nations and the international community in Timor-Leste. The job which he initiated with tremendous success, carried on by Kamalesh Sharma with equal competence and dedication, has not been completed. Any miscalculation, for whatever reason, in completely withdrawing the peacekeeping force — a very important political and psychological element — could betray and undermine the tremendous success that has been the United Nations role in Timor-Leste.

I believe that, as in the past, the members of the Council will display their habitual wisdom and experience and reach a satisfactory conclusion on the basis of the Secretary-General's report. For us, it is extremely important that the Council — which has been united on the issue of Timor-Leste since 1999 — remain united. But it is equally important that we should not, for the sake of apparent unity, reach a consensus that really undermines the recommendations of the Secretary-General. The substance of those recommendations with regard to maintaining a peacekeeping element in Timor-Leste must not be undermined because of the necessity of unity. I leave it to the members of the Council, with their wisdom and experience, to find a balance between the need for unity and at the same time retaining what is important. That is the substance of the Secretary-General's recommendations.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste for the kind words of support he addressed to me and for circulating the text of his statement in order to save time.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Singapore.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): At the outset, Mr. President, I hope you will permit me to make a small procedural suggestion. In the past, during significant debates, the Council would, from time to time, allow non-Council members to speak first. I hope that that practice will be considered in due course when we have significant debates. I make that point because I think today's debate is significant, as I will explain in my remarks. I am also, of course, obliged to thank Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Kamalesh Sharma and the people and the Government of Timor-Leste. I apologize for doing so quickly, but, as I have only five minutes, I will concentrate on substance. In the four and a half minutes that I have remaining, I would like to make five points.

My first point, which I would like to emphasize to the Council, is that we hope there will be a consensus on the need for continued United Nations assistance to Timor-Leste. I think that is the most important decision we need to take at this meeting. The reasons why begin with the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2004/117), which points out the need to consolidate and build upon the gains already made. I have not read the report, so I cannot say whether I agree with it 99 per cent or 100 per cent. But we agree significantly with the report.

The second point we would like to make is that a precipitous withdrawal could jeopardize the fragile success that we have had in Timor-Leste. When we talk about the success of Timor-Leste, we should not forget the point, just made so eloquently by Foreign Minister Ramos-Horta, that there is still fragility. We must bear that fragility in mind as we consider this decision. If members of the Council read my text, they will find that we compare building up Timor-Leste to building a house, saying that that we may have put up the skeletal framework of the house, but various key components must still be put in place. That job must still be

completed. We hope that that message will register with the Council.

Thirdly, we hope any drawdown will be based on a realistic assessment of the situation. It must be based on a hard-headed assessment of the realities on the ground, not carried out mechanically according to some abstract timetable. We make this point because we are aware that, in the past, a timetable was worked out for drawing down the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) and was based on a reading of the circumstances then. Circumstances have changed, and we must take a decision on the basis of the circumstances as they stand today. Frankly, the best description of those circumstances is found in the Secretary-General's report, which points out that institutional weaknesses pervade key institutions of governance despite the progress made in many areas.

The fourth point we would like to make is that we support the Secretary-General's recommendation for an extension of UNMISET. Here, as we are all aware, the man of the hour is Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi; his name is associated in the Council with the famous report that he submitted. And, of course, we are familiar with the Brahimi principle: that the Security Council should be told not what it wants to hear, but what it needs to hear. That was put across in the report presented to us today by Jean-Marie Guéhenno, in which the Secretary-General made a strong and carefully considered case for an extension of UNMISET for another year with a modified mandate and a reduced scale of some 58 civilian advisers, 157 civilian police advisers, 42 military liaison officers and a military contingent of some 310, including an infantry company with support and aviation elements.

Those recommendations reflect extensive consultations among, inter alia, the United Nations, UNMISET and the Timorese leaders. They are not unjustified requests and are certainly not excessive, given the magnitude of the task at hand. Indeed, as the Secretary-General notes, such a comparatively modest additional effort could make a crucial difference in broadening the scope and increasing the sustainability of the remarkable achievements already registered and in allowing Timor-Leste to reach a threshold of self-sufficiency.

My fifth and final point is, in some ways, the most important. As we can tell from the debate we have had so far and from listening to Foreign Minister Ramos-Horta, the recommendation for the retention of a military contingent will be the area of greatest debate. It is important to put that request in the proper context. While the security situation has remained, by and large, uneventful over the past few months, that is by no means indicative of the situation likely after May 2004. It is certainly not inconceivable that troublemakers are lying low until the United Nations withdraws its military and police presence. That is why we support this recommendation in the Secretary-General's report.

I want to reinforce the point made by Jean-Marie this morning when he said that a small formed military presence with aviation and support should be retained after May 2004. He added:

> "By maintaining a high level of visibility through regular patrols and civil-military cooperation, that component could help limit the destabilizing effect of too abrupt a downsizing exercise."

In my remarks, I have spelled out the reasons why this military presence should remain. We hope that the Security Council will support and agree to the recommendations made by the Secretary-General.

In conclusion, we believe that Timor-Leste has certainly come a long way, but that much remains to be done before it can be self-sufficient and ready to stand on its own. We hope that the Council will pay attention to the overall situation before it makes its final decision.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland.

Mr. Ryan (Ireland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia; the candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro; and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

Before making my statement, I would like to welcome back our good friend Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Timor-Leste. His

contribution to this debate is most welcome and invaluable.

The United Nations can be proud of what has been achieved by the people of Timor-Leste. With the assistance of this Organization, the support of this Council and the commitment of the wider international community, the advances made in Timor-Leste since independence have been remarkable.

The European Union commends and supports the efforts of the Timorese Government to consolidate the progress made to date, especially in governance and open leadership; the ongoing development of new legislative and judicial frameworks, including the rule of law; the rehabilitation of infrastructure and the support for regional integration; the development of planning and budgetary discipline; and, very importantly, the commitment to democratic norms and personal freedoms.

The European Union recognizes that a critical element of the success so far has been the hard work of the men and women of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET), and we commend them, and those countries that have supported them in their efforts, for their dedication.

The European Union notes that, as determined by the Security Council, the activities and size of UNMISET are gradually being reduced in preparation for the completion of its mandate on 20 May this year. Last October, the Council heard from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kamalesh Sharma, that the international community should consider carefully the completion of UNMISET's drawdown while also taking stock of what has been achieved, reflecting on the remaining tasks to be completed and deciding on the best way to fulfil the legitimate needs of Timor-Leste in the post-May 2004 period. In that regard, the European Union notes that, earlier this month, the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, Mr. Mari Alkatiri, wrote to the Secretary-General and expressed his Government's wish for the continued presence of a United Nations peacekeeping force in Timor-Leste beyond the expiry of the current UNMISET mandate.

As an organization, determining our approach to the disengagement of our peacekeeping and peace-building operations is a recurring challenge. Satisfying the continuing legitimate needs of the country in question must be balanced against ensuring the continued growth of sustainable national capacities for self-governance and self-reliance. In this regard, it is necessary for the international community, on a case-by-case basis, to focus on the tasks remaining and to carry out a careful and thorough analysis of any continuing threats to the maintenance of peace and security, as well as of the development of the judicial sector and the rule of law; the humanitarian situation, including the status of refugees and other displaced persons; the development of national security institutions, such as police and military forces; progress in national reconciliation; and the creation of a favourable climate for sustainable social and economic development.

In this regard, the European Union welcomes the Secretary-General's dispatching of an assessment team to Timor-Leste in January. The Union notes that the resulting report (S/2004/117) confirms that significant progress continues to be made and that further advances in Timorese capacity can be expected in the months ahead.

The European Union supports the efforts of the Timorese Government to consolidate the political institutions, to promote the social and economic development of the country and to uphold the rule of law while building a new nation. In particular, the Union welcomes the fact that the security situation has largely remained calm; relations between Timor-Leste and Indonesia have been good; the development of the country's public administration has continued to make progress; the Truth, Reception and Reconciliation Commission continues to provide a community-based solution for less serious crimes committed in connection with the political conflict; and that the national police force has assumed responsibility for routine policing throughout the country. In addition, and in the context of ending impunity and promoting a culture of accountability and transparency, the EU notes with interest that the process of prosecuting those accused of serious crimes has continued apace. The European Union will continue to follow closely the relevant trials in Dili and Jakarta.

The European Union thanks the Secretary-General for his thorough report on the current situation in Timor-Leste and notes that he states that, notwithstanding the commendable and substantial achievements, Timor-Leste continues to face a number of formidable challenges. The EU shares the view that further assistance will be needed to consolidate the

achievements already made. In this regard, a continuing — though modified — UNMISET presence after May 2004 seems to be required. The Secretary-General's analysis and his recommendation for an extension of UNMISET, with the appropriate modifications to its mandate and composition, deserve the Security Council's full consideration.

Notwithstanding the fact that the primary responsibility for a successful transition lies with the Timorese people themselves, it remains incumbent on the international community to consolidate the progress that is so evident in Timor-Leste. As is the case elsewhere in the world, we have an obligation to the people of Timor-Leste to continue our support for their progress through bilateral donor programmes, the work of the family of United Nations agencies, support from the Bretton Woods institutions and all the instruments we have at our disposal to consolidate their achievements and to ensure their continued advancement. I take this opportunity to reaffirm the European Union's commitment to the Timorese people to this end.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of New Zealand.

Mr. MacKay (New Zealand): New Zealand welcomes the Secretary-General's special report on the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) (S/2004/117), as introduced by Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno this morning. I would also very much like to join others in warmly acknowledging the presence of Foreign Minister Ramos-Horta in the Council again.

Like others who have spoken, we commend the progress that has been made in Timor-Leste through the work of UNMISET and its predecessor, the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). We also commend the work that has been done by the Government of Timor-Leste and the commitment of international donors to support these efforts.

New Zealand's principal concern is to see the important gains made in Timor-Leste safeguarded, and I think it is fair to say, given the comments that have been made here this morning that this is very much a common objective of both the Council members and the other States who have spoken. The path to nationhood for Timor-Leste has obviously been a difficult one, and it should not come as a surprise to any of us that there is still much to be done.

The role that the United Nations has played in Timor-Leste has been vital in assisting this new nation. Bilateral assistance programmes are playing an increasingly important role, but it is clear that there is much more to be done in establishing key institutions and in ensuring that Timor-Leste has been placed on a firm footing before United Nations support is ended.

In New Zealand's view, it is important for the international community to do its utmost to continue to support Timor-Leste through this transition period. New Zealand therefore fully endorses the recommendation of the Secretary-General for an extension of UNMISET for a further year in a reduced size and with a modified mandate, which would be a twelve-month consolidation phase.

In New Zealand's view, the composition of the mission recommended by the Secretary-General is appropriate, given the requirements on the ground. The Secretary-General's recommendation represents a significant further downsizing of the current mission across the board. There is to be a further reduction in the number of civilian advisers, and the civilian police component is to be reduced by a further 50 per cent. The military component, observers and troops — at present 1,750 military personnel — is to be reduced to less than 25 per cent of the current presence, to a minimum operational level of 350.

New Zealand agrees with the Secretary-General and the Timor-Leste Government about the importance of the assurances that would be provided by retention of a modest military force, as recommended, with quick-reaction and air-borne capability, to maintain confidence and stability in the border areas. During the visit of New Zealand's Minister for Foreign Affairs to Timor-Leste earlier this month, it was evident that there is considerable anxiety about this issue in Timor-Leste — and of course Foreign Minister Ramos-Horta spoke very eloquently on that issue. It was also very clear that as yet Timor-Leste has virtually no capacity to respond on its own to any incidents that might occur in the border areas. New Zealand remains open to views on how best to provide those assurances. But what is important is that they be credible and effective.

New Zealand welcomes the progress in the bilateral relationship between Timor-Leste and Indonesia. It will obviously be important to continue to

address border demarcation in the coming months, including at local level in the border areas, so as to build up mutual trust and confidence and to work towards the normalization of local cross-border relations.

New Zealand also strongly supports the continuation of the work of the Serious Crimes Unit for a further year. We also support further action on the part of the international community to follow up on the human rights abuses that occurred in East Timor in 1999. We further note the valuable work done by the Timor-Leste Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation to address lesser crimes and promote community reconciliation, and the fact that ongoing donor support will be necessary to enable the Commission to complete its work.

We endorse the Secretary-General's proposal for continuing United Nations support for capacity-building in the public administration of Timor-Leste. We note that the role of the Government of Timor-Leste in this process is vital. The Secretary-General has articulated a number of concerns, particularly on the need for the Timor-Leste Government to expedite the development of key aspects of the administration's legislative and regulatory framework, including the adoption of legislation in key areas. In this respect, I would like to mention the civil service act; legislation for the creation of the Office of the Provedor; legislation to ensure transparency and accountability; and an organic law for the police and a defence act for the military, as well as related regulations and policies to clarify their responsibilities and relationships.

Much has been achieved in Timor-Leste, but much remains to be done. Timor-Leste is one of the poorest countries in the world. It faces enormous challenges in nation-building and in the provision of the most basic services, such as in health and education, to its population, more than half of whom are under the age of 15. Continued assistance from the international community, both through the United Nations and bilaterally, will therefore be vital to support Timor-Leste in this important consolidation phase.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Australia, on whom I now call.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): Forgive me, Mr. President, if I dispense with courtesies, but, unlike Ambassador Mahbubani, I need all five minutes of my allotted time. So let me get straight to the substance.

We in Australia are proud of what we have done to assist Timor-Leste in building a stable and sustainable democracy. No country has done more. We remain committed to helping Timor-Leste with its security and development challenges. Together with the United Nations, we have a big stake in ensuring that East Timor is equipped to meet the challenges it faces, and that it succeeds. Australia's contribution has, of course, been part of a highly cooperative and effective international effort. It is our strong desire that this cooperative, consensus-based approach continue as we enter into a new phase of engagement with Timor-Leste.

Despite the encouraging progress, further international assistance to Timor-Leste remains essential. That is not in question; it is the form of assistance that we need to get right, and the Secretary-General's report (S/2004/117) is a useful point of departure. Australia fully supports the recommendation for a one-year extension of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor at a reduced level. The recommendations target the right areas of continuing need.

It is clear that the Mission needs some form of armed security component. Australia is firmly of the view that a back-up United Nations policing component is necessary to help East Timor address its likely law and order challenges. If the Council so decides, of course, we would also join the consensus on a peacekeeping force.

As the Council is aware, Australia has been carefully analysing Timor-Leste's security needs for a long time. In October last year, we told the Council what we believed the threats were and how they should be addressed. Developments since then have confirmed that our assessment was fundamentally sound. We consider that Timor-Leste's security challenges — highlighted, for example, by the 2002 Dili riot and the armed assaults near the border in early 2003 — remain substantial. But these are internal and will require a police, rather than a military, response.

Timor-Leste's external threat environment is relatively benign. Ex-militia elements in West Timor pose a much-reduced threat; the small group of remaining hardliners are focused primarily on cross-border criminal activity. The last major security

incident took place more than a year ago, and Indonesia continues to work against cross-border destabilization.

We share the Secretary-General's assessment about the weaknesses in Timor-Leste's security institutions. The capacity, experience and policy frameworks of its police service remain limited, and this, too, suggests that a back-up emergency United Nations police response group is likely to be required.

Our fundamental concern is that if a back-up United Nations police unit does not help Timor-Leste address its internal security challenges, what will? A properly designed emergency police response group would be able to deal with the broad spectrum of security incidents that might arise, including in the border area. Such a unit would serve an essential complementary role to any peacekeeping force presence — should, of course, the Council agree to that.

A police unit would have appropriate training and expertise to enable it to deal with Timor-Leste's internal law and order problems and would provide a more graduated and faster response to any incident. For example, a police unit could provide a constabulary function and would have the power to arrest. Under the model proposed by Australia, day-to-day and executive policing would be the sole responsibility of the Timor-Leste Government and its police service. The United Nations police unit would deploy only in emergency situations that risked overwhelming the local police, and at the request of Timor-Leste's Prime Minister. If agreed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General — after consulting with the United Nations police adviser and unit commander — the unit would be the lead agency for an incident until it was resolved and responsibility was formally handed back to the Timor-Leste Government. The model is similar to the call-out arrangements proposed by the Secretary-General for a peacekeeping force. Australia's experience suggests that such command and control arrangements do indeed work.

I should say plainly that we fully sympathize with the need for force protection for the unarmed military liaison officers, and would envision the police unit also having the capacity to protect United Nations personnel in emergency situations, as United Nations gendarmes have done in other contexts. The police unit must therefore have the capacity for timely self-deployment to both urban and rural areas and access to helicopter support.

Day to day, we would envision the police unit mentoring and providing some training to Timor-Leste's specialist police units, as well as conducting liaison visits throughout the country. This reassuring, visible presence would promote calm and security.

In short, we would see an armed back-up police unit being able to perform many of the tasks the Secretary-General has set out in his report on East Timor's post-UNMISET needs. The safety of such a unit would not be predicated on the availability of a substantial back-up peacekeeping force. The unit would be of a size capable of handling likely law and order threats. It would be well armed and backed by local police and, subject to future legislation, potentially Timor-Leste's defence force.

We believe that the best way ahead for the new phase of UNMISET is clear. It involves a model built on the key recommendations of the Secretary-General that also addresses the real internal security risks and weak policing capacities. We encourage the Council to move expeditiously to endorse such an outcome and maintain the tradition of consensus on this issue.

Mr. President (*spoke in Chinese*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Japan, on whom I now call.

Mr. Motomura (Japan): Mr. President, I would like to thank you for having convened this open meeting of the Security Council, which provides us with a very good opportunity for an exchange of views on the future of Timor-Leste and the role of the United Nations. I would like also to thank Mr. Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his comprehensive briefing, and to take this opportunity to welcome Mr. Ramos-Horta, Foreign Minister of Timor Leste.

The Government of Japan welcomes the fact that, since the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) initiated its activities, much has been accomplished in the areas of public administration, serious crimes, and internal and external security matters, including progress on border-control issues. We also welcome the news that Timor-Leste's relationship with Indonesia has been further strengthened.

UNMISET's mandate will conclude this May. We believe, however, that it will continue to be necessary for the international community to extend its support to Timor-Leste, as the Secretary-General's report points out, in such areas as public administration, the judiciary, and national security and stability. My Government recognizes the consolidation and building of peace as one of the major challenges faced by the international community, and we believe it is crucially important for the United Nations and the international community to make certain that those valuable incipient achievements in the areas of peace, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and development take root and endure.

What has been achieved by the international community in Timor-Leste since the start of the United Nations transitional administration there can be regarded as a striking success story, and we therefore welcome the Secretary-General's proposal to extend the mandate of UNMISET for one additional year, in order to consolidate what has been achieved up to this point on as firm a foundation as possible.

The Government of Japan would like to make two comments relating to the extension of UNMISET. First, it is of crucial importance for a young country such as Timor-Leste to be provided support in the area of nation-building by civilian experts. For that reason, we endorse the report's recommendation that the extended UNMISET should have 58 civilian advisers in all areas of Government administration, including financial management, and in the justice sector.

The second point relates to the issue of security and safety in Timor-Leste. Japan believes that we should pay serious attention to the situation in Timor-Leste, described in the report as follows:

> "... there appears to be a lack of confidence among the Timorese public in the security situation after May 2004" *(S/2004/117, para. 49)*.

The Secretary-General's report also points out tasks for the extended UNMISET and suggests that there remain a small number of military liaison officers deployed in the border area, a minimum contingent of peacekeeping forces to provide protection for all United Nations personnel, and civilian police advisers to support the development of Timor-Leste's police force. The Japanese Government considers these proposals to be the result of the assessment of the situation in Timor-Leste and to reflect the will of the Government and people of Timor-Leste. We believe that United Nations peacekeeping operations work most effectively when they are in accord with the intentions of the Governments and peoples of the recipient countries, and when they are implemented based on a unified consensus within the international community. We expect that the Council will seriously consider the Secretary-General's report in indicating what kinds of tasks should be retained in the extended UNMISET.

In support of building a self-sustainable Timor-Leste, Japan has pledged, and has been steadily implementing, assistance of up to $60 million over the three-year period following independence, with a focus on peace-building and reconstruction in three key areas — agriculture, infrastructure, and human resources development. We are pleased to learn that the roads and bridges which the Engineering Group of our Self-Defence Forces has constructed and repaired for UNMISET's activities are benefiting the people of Timor-Leste as well. We believe that such support is in line with the needs of Timor-Leste, as described in the report of the Secretary-General.

I wish to reiterate how important it is for the leaders of Timor-Leste to be united in governing their country, for the people of Timor-Leste to participate in nation-building efforts as a matter of their own responsibility, and for the international community to continue to extend its support. The Government of Japan, for its part, will continue to provide appropriate assistance for the consolidation of peace and development in Timor-Leste.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Indonesia, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Jenie (Indonesia): Let me start by first of all recognizing the presence of the Foreign Minister of Timor-Leste, Mr. Ramos-Horta. The delegation of Indonesia has always attached great importance to any debate relating to Timor-Leste, particularly because of its historical, socio-economic and cultural ties with Indonesia. My country also recognizes the role played by the international community in helping the process of the development of Timor-Leste, including UNMISET, whose mandate will end in May this year. We hope that Indonesia's contributions to the implementation of UNMISET's mandate will be recognized by the international community as well.

Indonesia is of the view that whatever mechanism is to replace UNMISET, the Security Council must take into consideration the positive relationship between Indonesia and Timor-Leste. As we also learned from the Secretary-General's report, the situation in Timor-Leste has been growing progressively more stable and its relationship with Indonesia more cordial.

From the very beginning, Indonesia has demonstrated its unwavering interest in developing friendly ties with Timor- Leste. As a result, the Government-to-Government relationship between both nations has increasingly been strengthened. That relationship is characterized by a strong commitment at the highest political level, reflected in the State visits made by both Presidents, the regular visits by the two Foreign Ministers, and the establishment of the Joint Ministerial Commission, the Joint Border Committee and other bilateral mechanisms.

The Ministerial Commission has established several working groups to deal with border issues, trade and finance, legal matters, educational and cultural affairs, and transport and telecommunications.

At the regional level, in October 2002, Indonesia's Southwest Pacific Dialogue initiative, of which Timor-Leste is also a member, was realized. The second ministerial dialogue was held in New York in 2003. Indonesia was also quick to encourage Timor-Leste to get involved in meetings of the Association of South-East Asian Nations.

On the question of refugees, it is important to remember that, through close cooperation between the two Governments and with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), more than 250,000 refugees have returned voluntarily to Timor-Leste. As of December 2002, Indonesia had declared that there were no more refugees from Timor-Leste. The remaining 28,000 East Timorese who opted to stay in Indonesia are now being processed as Indonesian citizens and will be given the opportunity to be relocated within Indonesia. The Government of Indonesia is prepared, however, to assist any of them who voluntarily want to return to Timor-Leste.

Let me now turn to the issue of the separated Timorese children. Since UNHCR will no longer be directly involved in this matter, the Government of Indonesia, in cooperation with the Government of Timor-Leste, will fully take care of the children through reunification and local integration. As of December 2003, over 2,000 cases had been resolved through reunification. In addition, there are many East Timorese children who live in Timor-Leste and are separated from their parents who are now in Indonesia, and should not be forgotten. This matter is one of the issues on the agenda of the Joint Ministerial Commission between Indonesia and Timor-Leste.

Indonesia and Timor-Leste have worked hard to build a strong relationship on the basis of forward-looking policies. It is our hope that UNMISET will support that strong relationship.

Having stated the positive realities and underlined the good relationship between Indonesia and Timor-Leste, I must stress that it is unfortunate and a matter of regret that the report contains unnecessary notions that do not accurately reflect the facts of the matter. The report suggests, for instance, that

> "tensions arose following the conduct of military exercises by the Indonesian armed forces, without the prior knowledge of their Timorese counterparts, on an uninhabited island near Oecussi whose ownership has not been formally agreed by the two countries" (*S/2004/117, para. 10*).

In our view, this is capable of creating the wrong picture of Indonesia, which is unjustifiable and would be counterproductive. First, no tension arose in connection with this matter in December 2003. Secondly, existing legal national and international documents show that the uninhabited location in reference, Batek Island, belongs to Indonesia. As a result of this situation, therefore, no need has arisen for a formal agreement concerning the ownership of the island, as the report suggests. While the Indonesian navy did conduct a small and routine naval exercise on the island, it did so squarely within Indonesian territory.

Finally, Indonesia has continued to work in the best interests of all Indonesians, their neighbours and the international community. Its commitment and determination to ensure improvements in Timor-Leste have been demonstrated in various ways. I can assure the Security Council that my Government will continue those endeavours. It is within that spirit that the international community should render its support.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Portugal.

Mr. De Santa Clara Gomes (Portugal): To comply with the time limit you set, Sir, I will shorten my statement.

I would like to begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his latest report on the situation in Timor-Leste and Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his presentation. I would also like to welcome the presence of Foreign Minister José Ramos-Horta and his very valuable contribution to this debate.

Since I associate myself with the statements made on behalf of the European Union and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, I will make only three remarks. First, we agree with the evaluation made by the United Nations of the situation in Timor-Leste and share the Timorese Government's assessment of its own limitations in coping with internal and external security problems. In fact, threats to internal stability can be expected to continue beyond May 2004 and we know that Timorese defence and security forces are still inexperienced and vulnerable, and clearly not able to respond effectively to major disturbances.

In this context, even relatively low levels of destabilization could have a significant impact and serious consequences for the stability of Timor-Leste. We note that there is a continuing problem resulting from the presence of 28,000 former refugees along the border. There have been reports of sightings of armed gangs and criminal elements and suggestions of preparations for destabilizing activity by Timorese groups with unclear agendas.

My second point is a direct consequence of that perception. Under the present circumstances, Portugal strongly supports the Secretary-General's proposal to extend the mandate of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) for a further 12-month consolidation phase in a reduced and modified form, as described in his report. This support would include a military component, although much reduced from the present level.

My final remark has to do with the responsibility of the international community and of the Security Council in relation to Timor-Leste. The Council can take pride in the contribution it has unfailingly provided to the Timorese people. The Council literally made possible the creation of that country. All of this began just four years ago. During this period, we have been able to create a country literally from the ashes. At the same time, the international presence has been steadily decreasing. Let me recall that, in May 2002, UNMISET included 5,000 observers and troops; two years later, it has been reduced to 1,750. Now, the Secretary-General is recommending today that this presence be limited to a military component of 350 observers and troops. This clear trend shows that Timor-Leste, far from becoming a victim of a United Nations-dependency syndrome, is successfully preparing for the end of that peacekeeping operation in the near future. We could simply wish that other peacekeeping operations, despite their unquestionable importance, had been able to achieve so much in such a short period of time.

As in the past, Portugal will remain committed and ready to contribute to the consolidation and development of Timor-Leste and to the United Nations efforts to that effect.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Thailand.

Mrs. Laohaphan (Thailand): As this is the first time that I address this body in my new capacity, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and to thank you for convening today's open debate on Timor-Leste.

Thailand has taken a keen interest in the issue of Timor-Leste, for that newest Member of the United Nations is not only a neighbour in our immediate region, but also a proven case of success for United Nations peacekeeping operations and nation-building exercises. That a country could become independent and recognized in its own right in just a few years owes much to the will and determination of its people and more, perhaps, to the collective efforts of the United Nations and individual countries in helping bring into existence a new State.

The birth of a nation is always a complex and arduous process, entailing sacrifices and pain while procuring great joy and pride for its people. Nurturing a nation torn by conflicts and violence until it becomes a stable, self-reliant and responsible international citizen is an even more daunting task that demands an extended period of international support, as well as necessary economic and technical assistance. The United Nations needs to ensure that peace and security continue to prevail and become irreversible in Timor-Leste, as a safe and secure environment is a precondition for a country to embark on smooth

economic and social development. The question is: What assistance does Timor-Leste need at the moment and to what extent should we provide it?

Thailand welcomes the Secretary-General's report on UNMISET (S/2004/117) and appreciates the assessment of the situation on the ground presented by Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno. My delegation listened attentively to the statement of Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste, as well as to the views expressed by Council members and other Member States. Although opinions diverge as to the scope and nature of Timor-Leste's security requirements, a common view emanating from around the table is that we must make sure that the gains made over the past several years in Timor-Leste are consolidated and that the security environment is sound before UNMISET's eventual withdrawal from the field.

Given the general volatility of a nascent country and the complexity of the whole nation-building exercise while the rule of law and institutions are still being strengthened in Timor-Leste, it is in the interest of the international community that the United Nations should remain engaged in that country for a further period. Thailand therefore supports a continued United Nations presence, as suggested by the Secretary-General.

Thailand has always played a very active role in assistance to Timor-Leste since 1999. Our long-standing commitment to assisting Timor-Leste is demonstrated by our involvement in international peacekeeping and peace-building operations from the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) to the current UNMISET. Thailand now maintains 62 police and military personnel in Timor-Leste, comprising demining experts, medical officers, military observers and administrative officers. In that regard, Thailand would also like to reaffirm its readiness to continue to take part in United Nations peacekeeping efforts in Timor-Leste after 20 May 2004.

The Secretary-General himself has repeated time and again that there can be no peace without economic development and no peace or economic development without social justice. Lasting peace still remains elusive and a distant hope in Timor-Leste, a country that continues to grapple with prevalent poverty and hunger, a high illiteracy rate, an inadequate public health system and infrastructure and a fledgling democracy. However, the country is not without potential for growth and stability. If we are serious about achieving in time the eight targets set forth in the Millennium Declaration, we have to help Timor-Leste as well as other countries that are less fortunate and less equipped than we are to carry out their national economic and social development.

The Government of Thailand is conscious of the complementarity existing between peace and development and desires to promote and strengthen human security in Timor-Leste and throughout our region. We welcome and encourage Timor-Leste to have more interaction with the Association of the South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and to participate in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). We have also offered bilateral technical and economic assistance to Timor-Leste in diverse fields, covering agriculture, public health, fisheries, trade, investment, banking and insurance, tourism, internal security and energy. I am happy to report a positive trend emerging from the bilateral programme of assistance that we have undertaken for Timor-Leste and its people, and it is our hope that our training programmes will enable students and officials to become valuable human resources that are crucial for their country's sustainable economic and social progress.

It is my sincere hope that more can be done to help Timor-Leste survive and thrive on its own. The Security Council can contribute to that end by extending the mandate of the United Nations presence in Timor-Leste a while longer, as recommended by the Secretary-General. Undoubtedly, a stable, democratic and prosperous Timor-Leste will further reinforce and contribute to regional as well as global peace and development.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the representative of Thailand for her kind words addressed to me. I also welcome her to her post in New York.

I give the floor to the representative of Malaysia.

Mr. Mohd Radzi (Malaysia): Let me first express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report (S/2004/117) and to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his presentation on the situation in Timor-Leste this morning. We also join others in welcoming Foreign Minister Ramos-Horta in our midst today.

We are pleased to note that the overall situation in Timor-Leste continues to register encouraging progress. We believe that the remarkable progress recorded in Timor-Leste in the face of the numerous constraints confronting the newly independent nation could not have been achieved without the commitment, determination and strong resolve of the country's leadership and the support of the Timorese in general.

While we applaud that progress, at the same time we must share and acknowledge the observations and concerns expressed by the Secretary-General: despite the achievements, the situation in many areas nonetheless remains fragile. We should therefore by no all means feel complacent about what has been achieved thus far. The reality is that, at this stage, Timor-Leste still needs the continuing support of the United Nations and other external assistance.

It is clear from the Secretary-General's report to the Council that Timor-Leste will not be ready for self-sufficiency within the period of two years of the mandate of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET). The progress achieved in many fields under UNMISET's three programme areas is still too fragile to be left on its own without the continuing presence of UNMISET beyond 20 May 2004.

In the crucial area of public administration, for example, it was highlighted in the report that the administration continues to lack managerial skill and has not yet acquired the skills to discharge a number of essential tasks, including in the important area of finance. It was also pointed out that the administration's legislative and regulatory framework too is at a very early stage of development. Attention was also drawn to the justice system in Timor-Leste, which remains particularly weak, with serious negative implications for the proper functioning of the justice, police and prison services.

Similarly, in the area of security, the National Police of Timor-Leste, which is the central, core institution of the country's security and stability, has yet to be able effectively to fulfil its responsibilities. While significant progress has been made in the development of the national police force, it was noted with concern that its capacity, experience and policy framework remain limited.

It was also noted that the Timor-Leste defence force will not be able to create before 20 May 2004 an effective rapid deployment capability to deal with armed groups in the border districts. That is attributed mainly, among other things, to delays in the recruitment, equipping and training processes.

The Secretary-General has highlighted many more instances in many areas that point to the need for the extension of UNMISET's mandate beyond 20 May 2004. He has stressed that further assistance will be essential to consolidate and build upon the gains that have been made in an atmosphere of peace and stability. The Secretary-General concluded his report by recommending to the Council the extension of UNMISET's mandate for a further year, in a reduced size and with a modified mandate.

Malaysia supports the recommendation of the Secretary-General to extend UNMISET's mandate for a further year, in a reduced size and with a modified mandate, as contained in his report to the Council. We believe that, given the relatively short period since Timor-Leste gained its independence, it would be too ambitious to expect that the various institutions that were established with the assistance of the United Nations and bilateral assistance could now become fully operational and ready to ensure the full enjoyment of security and stability in this very young nation. Timor-Leste must be given the necessary support and adequate time to ensure that the peace and stability and the progress that have been built will not be wasted.

In supporting the recommendations of the Secretary-General as contained in his report, we wish to underline that, when determining the size of a peacekeeping force, it is also necessary to give careful consideration to the actual threat anticipated in the country. The size of the force should be appropriate to and commensurate with the actual threat. We wish to emphasize that an oversized force might not bode well for the confidence-building measures that are being nurtured, and which are highly essential for peace and security in the region. Maintaining it would also entail unnecessarily high costs.

As a country of the region, Malaysia will continue within its capacity and capability to extend support and assistance to Timor-Leste in its nation-building process. As we have assured Timor-Leste, we are prepared to share our past experiences in nation-building, as Malaysia shares many similarities with that country. We will continue to provide technical assistance in various fields, as discussed and agreed

between our two Governments, to assist Timor-Leste in its national development.

We believe it is crucial for the friends of Timor-Leste in the region in particular, and for the international community to offer their full support to Timor-Leste. We warmly welcome the cordial and constructive contacts and the friendly bilateral engagements between Timor-Leste and its most immediate and important neighbour, Indonesia. We believe that that augurs well for Timor-Leste in its desire to play a useful role in the region and for the aspirations of the countries in the region to peace and stability.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me pleasure to welcome the presence of Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste. I wish him and the Government and people of Timor-Leste every success in building their nation. I should like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his special report on the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) (S/2004/117) and to thank Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General, for presenting the report. In addition, the efforts of Mr. Kamalesh Sharma, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, merit our full appreciation.

The Secretary-General's special report reviews, in a general and comprehensive manner, all the important developments in Timor-Leste since its independence, the achievements made thus far in its reconstruction and the changes facing the country. We agree with many of the statements made thus far that Timor-Leste is one of the success stories of the United Nations because of intensive follow-up as a result of the efforts undertaken by the General Assembly and its Special Political and Decolonization Committee, the Security Council and the Secretariat. The delegation of Syria concurs with the report that the political institutions developed by Timor-Leste and the progress it has achieved are worthy of admiration.

My delegation expresses its satisfaction with paragraph 9 of the report, which indicates that the excellent communication that has characterized the relations between Timor-Leste and Indonesia continued over the reporting period, supported by commitment at the highest political levels on both sides. We hope that the Governments of both countries will, as soon as possible, reach agreements that serve the interests of both countries with regard to the issues mentioned in the report.

The report of the Secretary-General contains a special proposal to provide assistance to Timor-Leste in the coming period in the areas of stability, justice, internal security, the rule of law, external security and border control. There are also a number of excellent observations at the end of the report. We agree with the Secretary-General's analysis and his important ideas for follow-up by the United Nations, including the provision of the assistance needed to consolidate and build upon the gains already made. While we express our appreciation to donor countries, we hope that they will continue to assist in Timor-Leste's reconstruction and development process.

My delegation notes in particular the Secretary-General's assertion that UNMISET continues to play a decisive role as the country's security capabilities are being built. We agree with him that the capacity of the Timorese authorities to meet the challenges ahead still requires assistance and support from the United Nations. In that regard, my delegation takes note of the letter dated 12 February 2004 from Mr. Mari Alkatiri, Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, to the Secretary-General (S/2004/114), in which he requests the presence of United Nations peacekeping troops, a battalion-sized military force, backed by helicopters, in Timor-Leste beyond May 2004.

In the light of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General and the urgent need for such a force, as emphasized in the Prime Minister's letter and in the statement made to the Council this morning by Timor-Leste's Foreign Minister, Syria supports the request for an extension of UNMISET's mandate. We hope that any decision taken by the Security Council with regard to Timor-Leste will be reached by consensus. That would help to ensure an environment of stability, which would improve and strengthen the capacities of the institutions of this nascent nation.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Kim Sam-hoon (Republic of Korea): Let me begin by welcoming the presence of the Minister for

Foreign Affairs of Timor-Leste and by thanking the Secretary-General for his special report on the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) (S/2004/117). My delegation also expresses its gratitude to Mr. Guéhenno for his informative briefing.

Over the past 18 months, significant progress has been made towards the fulfilment of UNMISET's mandate in the areas of democratization, security and economic and social development. Credit for the considerable achievements made in that short time span should be given to the newly established Timorese Government for its unswerving commitment and efforts and to the people of Timor-Leste for persevering in the face of formidable challenges.

The United Nations, too, has played a pivotal role in the progress made in Timor-Leste. The stable environment provided through the actions of the Security Council has proved crucial to the success of the ongoing endeavours to consolidate the nascent nation's independence. In that regard, we cite the close partnership between Timor-Leste and the United Nations as a model for future undertakings in post-conflict situations.

Timor-Leste now stands at a critical juncture in the peace-building process. Like many newly independent countries, it faces the daunting challenges of achieving stability, developing democracy and overall capacity-building on its road towards a self-sustaining society. In that regard, my delegation shares the concerns reflected in the previous and current reports of the Secretary-General.

My delegation believes that the Secretary-General's assessments aptly reflect the request of the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, His Excellency, Mr. Mari Alkatiri, and the recommendations of the technical assessment mission that visited Timor-Leste last month. From the reports, it is clear that Timor-Leste requires further assistance to sustain what has been achieved and to make further progress in the areas of stability, democracy and justice, internal security and law enforcement, and external security and border control. We concur with the view of the Secretary-General that the United Nations should continue to play a role in the country's nation-building until such time as Timor-Leste can firmly stand on its own two feet.

Noting the recommendations of the Secretary-General with deep interest, we support an extended presence of the United Nations in Timor-Leste beyond May 2004. Clearly, the substantial support and assistance of the international community must not be phased out prematurely. The Republic of Korea believes that the overall assessment of the situation on the ground should serve as the basis for decision-making on how to best organize and structure the international efforts.

My delegation is confident that the efforts and assistance of the international community, in conjunction with the dedication and determination of the people of Timor-Leste, will prevail in establishing a nation underpinned by the rule of law, human rights and sustainable development. The Republic of Korea, as one of the major troop-contributing countries from 1999 to 2003, remains committed to assisting in the realization of that noble goal.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Fiji.

Mr. Draunimasi (Fiji): As the last speaker on this issue, Sir, I wish to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency and, through you, to thank the Foreign Minister of Timor-Leste, Mr. José Ramos-Horta, for his personal attendance at this important meeting.

The Secretary-General's comprehensive report (S/2004/117) recognizes the need to consolidate and build upon the gains in peace and security in Timor-Leste. Clearly, Timor-Leste needs to reach a level of self-sufficiency and sustainability without fear of the return of an environment of destabilization. History has taught us that, when peace operations are prematurely withdrawn, situations often revert to violence and conflict. We have spoken in the past about the enormous waste that would result from a non-strategic exit from Timor-Leste, which would expose any latent vulnerabilities in the newly emerging democracy.

The United Nations must be vigilant in guarding against what would appear to be a neo-colonial tendency in terms of developing democratic processes. This vigilance, however, needs to be balanced with the needs of the Government and the people of Timor-Leste in the process of nation building. We note that, for Timor-Leste, the sine qua non for achieving the essence of democracy is a sound and secure environment. We are therefore sensitive to that country's requests for a continuing level of peacekeeping, which would engender an environment

that is more conducive to the Government, assisted by the United Nations, being able to nurture stability and security.

The Secretary-General's recommendations in paragraph 64 of his report are sound and strategic and give credibility to the immense international, intergovernmental and bilateral investment in Timor-Leste leading up to the successful mission under the very able stewardship of Ambassador Kamalesh Sharma.

We have every confidence that the Government of Timor-Leste will thus be better positioned to engage its resources and political will in order to take any outstanding legislative or executive measures. Much progress has reportedly been made on the very sensitive issue of border demarcation. We again feel assured that both Timor-Leste and Indonesia will work together to resolve and push forward on this issue. Ultimately, the resolution of this issue has an important bearing on the status of refugees and displaced persons and on sustainable peace and security.

While we fully support the democratic process in Timor-Leste and the engagement of a battalion of around 300 troops, it must be emphasized that a timeline aiming at an end to the mission must be respected. This will ensure that Timor-Leste achieves full independence and has a smooth transition, marked by development, in a timely manner.

Much is at stake in the Asian region in relation to the state of affairs in Timor-Leste. We take pride in the successful intervention of the United Nations in this case. We can strengthen this commitment with the support of the international community for an early and imminent process of peaceful, democratic and stable development. We look forward to that day.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the representative of Fiji for his kind words addressed to me.

I now give the floor to the Executive Secretary of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, Mr. João Augusto de Médicis.

Mr. De Médicis: Mr. President, in response to your request and following the good example of Foreign Minister Ramos-Horta, I shall present a very short version of my statement. I understand that the full text will be distributed.

Let me thank you, Mr. President, and the other Security Council members for inviting the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) to take part in this meeting. Such an opportunity is a milestone in the history of our organization and constitutes an important acknowledgement of our work.

Our Community was created in 1996 by the Governments of Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal and Sao Tome and Principe. From day one, we took to heart Timor-Leste's quest for sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. More than just our first, this was our founding initiative. Indeed, our maturity as a group of fellow nations was marked on 20 May 2002, when we proudly accepted Timor-Leste as our eighth member State. That day, the eight Portuguese-speaking countries internationally asserted their peaceful and democratic agenda. That was also the day when we reclaimed a cultural heritage rooted in five centuries of history and exchange among Asia, Africa, Europe and South America.

Our Community brings together countries of different sizes, resources and degrees of development. Some of our member States rank among the world's poorest nations. Timor-Leste's struggle to overcome its misfortunes and the efforts of its society over the past four years to reaffirm the country's potential have constituted quite a success story. But an attentive observer will understand that this recent achievement is still far from being safely established.

With dedication and professionalism, the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), under the outstanding leadership of Sergio Vieira de Mello, helped create a new nation, with high standards for its public life and a strategic vision for its future. That challenging task is currently being complemented by UNTAET's successor, the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET). Although much has been accomplished, the CPLP understands that Timor-Leste still needs the support of the United Nations in order to become a stable and self-sustaining nation.

The special report of the Secretary-General on UNMISET (S/2004/117), presented last week, points correctly to the necessity of applying the concept of downsizing in a balanced and careful way. The CPLP welcomes the report and endorses the observations and recommendations set out in paragraphs 62 to 68.

In the area of human rights, as the report made clear, further efforts will be necessary in order to bring open issues to closure and allow for solid advances in national reconciliation. In the area of public administration, international assistance will also continue to be required for some time to assure that crucial tasks are discharged.

Concerning UNMISET's police and military components, the CPLP agrees with those who believe that it is too early for a handover of full defence responsibilities to the Government of Timor-Leste. Although the situation in the country is peaceful, one could argue that this very situation relies on the stabilizing role played by the United Nations peacekeeping force. Potential threats are dormant to a great extent because a sound element of deterrence is in place.

As the memory and the physical evidence of the events of 1999 still linger over Timor-Leste, some important issues, such as serious crimes and former refugees, remain unresolved. Consequently, the CPLP believes that the hard-won achievements of nation-building in Timor-Leste must not be jeopardized by an untimely withdrawal of the UNMISET military component.

Internal security and law enforcement are issues that also need to be addressed. The UNMISET police forces, in which personnel from CPLP countries take part, are an element of stability that should be preserved. Moreover, the National Police of Timor-Leste could only benefit from the extension of the mentoring and monitoring provided by the UNMISET police component.

That is the message the CPLP would like to convey to the Security Council. The United Nations has been doing a superb job in Timor-Leste. We share the common hope that the Security Council will continue to help that new nation overcome the problems of its past, providing it with the necessary means to advance towards a stable, peaceful and prosperous future.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to Mr. Hédi Annabi, Assistant Secretary-General, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, to respond to comments.

Mr. Annabi: I will be very brief. I just wanted to respond to an important issue raised by Ambassador Thomson of the United Kingdom and to say that we fully agree that proposed bilateral assistance for the Timor-Leste police should be coordinated with multilateral assistance now and that that coordination should not be delayed.

We based our estimate of the residual requirement of the Timor-Leste police on the information that was available to us at the time we prepared the report. We would therefore very much welcome any further information that bilateral partners might be willing to share on specific plans that they have developed for assistance to the Timor-Leste police and, more important, on the timetable for the deployment of their proposed assistance to the Timorese police. We will then be able to adjust our own estimates to reflect the offers of bilateral assistance in our end-of-April report, but we believe that adjustments should ultimately be made not only on the basis of anticipated assistance but on the basis of the assistance that will be effectively available on the ground in East Timor by the end of April, before the Council takes a decision at the end of the mandate of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Annabi for his comments.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list.

On behalf of the Security Council, I would like once again to thank Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste, for attending today's meeting.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.35 p.m.